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14 diet choices

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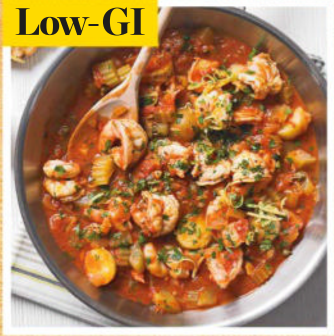
Healthy kedgeree

5:2

Paleo

Keto

Atkins


Low-GI

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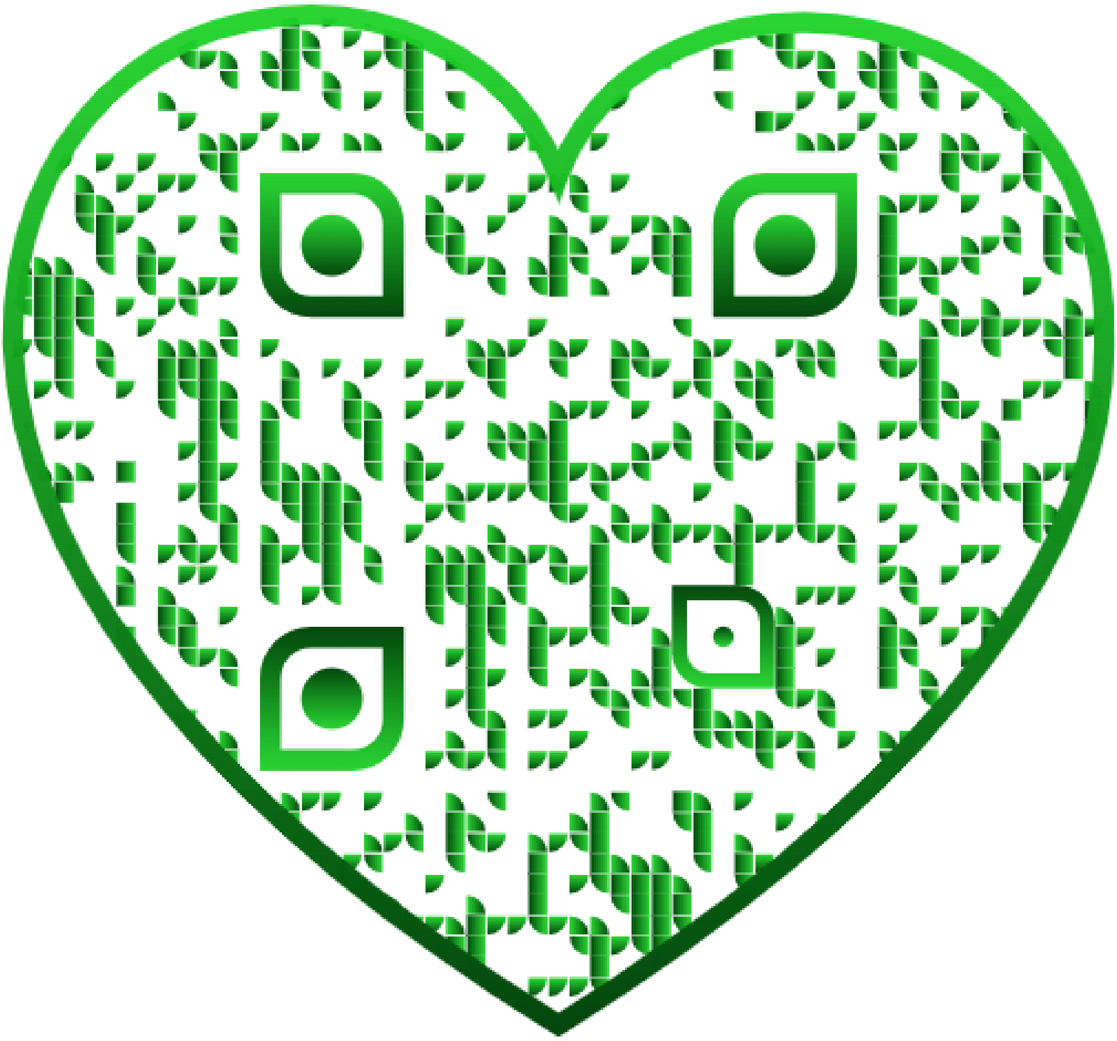

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*Oat beta-glucan has been shown to lower blood cholesterol. High cholesterol is a risk factor in the development of coronary heart disease. The health benefit is achieved with a daily intake of 3g of oat beta-glucan. It is important to maintain a varied and balanced diet and a healthy lifestyle.

goodFOOD ULTIMATE DIETS Collection

Welcome

Hands up who's been on a diet in the past? Or is on a diet now?

Or is thinking about trying a diet? Every one of us, right? But it's a minefield out there: so many diets, so many eating plans, so much information... so much confusion. This is where our Ultimate Diets Collection comes in. Our experts, Good Food health editor Emma Hartfield and nutritionist Kerry Torrens, have compiled the most popular diets, explained how they work and evaluated their pros and cons. In short, it's everything you need to decide on a diet that is right for you. So, before you browse, have a think: What are your goals? Perhaps you want to lose a few pounds. Or maybe you just want more energy, fewer mood swings, or better sleep? Whatever your ambitions, we have everything you need to make a wise, personal choice.

Keith

Keith Kendrick,
Group magazines editor

Meet our health experts

Emma Hartfield

As Good Food's health editor, Emma devised our diet guides to help people make informed decisions around suitable healthy eating plans. She has 24 years of experience writing for health and food magazines and newspapers.

Kerry Torrens

Kerry Torrens is a registered nutritionist with a postgraduate diploma in personalised nutrition and nutritional therapy. She is a member of the British Association for Nutrition and Lifestyle Medicine and a member of the Guild of Food Writers.

Photographs: CAFOTODIGITAL / E+ / GETTY, DAVID COTSWORTH, MYLES NEW

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Collection
14 diet choices
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Paleo
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Everything you need for healthy eating... whatever your goals

Sardine kedgeree, p15

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The majority of these recipes have previously appeared in Good Food, and were tested and nutritionally analysed by a team of experts.

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Healthy eating guide

Our top tips for eating healthily on a budget, plus ways to improve your sleeping habits

Did you know that what you eat can affect everything from your quality of sleep to your stress levels? Here, our team of experts – including nutritionists and health writers – share their best tips and tricks for how to eat healthily even when you're on a budget, as well as offering advice on choosing foods that will help promote better sleep and mental wellbeing. Remember that any time you consider altering your diet, it's important to speak to your regular GP or dietician for tailored advice that suits your personal health concerns and goals. For more tips and information about nutrition, visit our online health hub at *goodfood.com/health*.

Healthy eating on a budget

We often think that eating well is expensive, but these tips will help you achieve a balanced, nutritious and delicious diet that is also cost-effective

Start by identifying foods you enjoy eating, then choose those ingredients that happen to be inexpensive and healthy too:

- **Protein**: eggs, cheaper cuts of meat, canned or frozen fish, dried or canned beans, peas and lentils or tofu; frozen fish and meat can often work out cheaper too.
- **Dairy**: yogurt, milk, cottage cheese.
- **Grains**: rice, pasta, oats, barley, couscous, quinoa.
- **Fruits**: seasonal fruits can often be the cheapest. Look for apples, pears and oranges. Tropical fruits, especially bananas, are also a good winter option. Frozen berries are great for making smoothies and lighter desserts.
- **Vegetables**: the same applies to veg – seasonal is best. Potatoes, carrots, squash, broccoli, cauliflower and onions are good options in the winter. Many supermarkets also offer 'wonky' veg – produce that doesn't fit the normal standards of sale in terms of shape, size or colour – for less money. Frozen vegetables are also usually less expensive than fresh, and still retain all the vitamins; spinach, peas and sweetcorn freeze particularly well. Canned tomatoes are a cost-effective base for many savoury recipes. If you're buying canned vegetables, choose the ones canned in water rather than brine.

1 Plan your meals

One of the best ways to keep costs down is to plan your meals around budget-friendly ingredients. When you plan ahead, you not only cut down on food waste, but also avoid impulse-buying when you're hungry and have no meal in mind.

2 Buy own-brand products

These are usually cheaper, and as all food manufacturers must follow the same standards, they're just as nutritious and often a similar quality too.

3 Buy in bulk

While bulk-buying is a great way to stock up for less, be sure to avoid overspending on things you won't use – only bulk-buy things you need or use regularly.

4 Shop for seasonal produce

Learn which season your favourite produce is at its best in and stock up when it's time. You can freeze a lot of different fruit and veg for later. Find out more at *goodfood.com/howto/guide/top-tips-freezing-food*

5 Bring your own lunch

The cost of buying lunch from cafes and shops adds up really quickly. You'll be amazed how much you can save by packing your own.

6 Pack snacks

Snacking can catch you out in terms of cost and nutrition. Keep healthy snacks such as veg sticks and hummus, popcorn, energy bars and nuts on hand.

Healthy sleep

Learn how to optimise your sleep habits and practices, from sticking to a routine and avoiding caffeine to creating a restful sleep environment

Adequate sleep is essential for both physical and mental wellbeing. Good sleep practice improves your focus and concentration, promotes healing and reduces your risk of a plethora of health conditions.

The term 'sleep hygiene' refers to the habits and practices conducive to sleeping well on a regular basis. One of the key principles of sleep hygiene is simply achieving an appropriate amount of sleep for your own requirements. Too much or too little can negatively affect your health: researchers agree that between seven and nine hours is the optimal length of shut-eye for the average adult.

As with many things, the key to improving your sleep is to experiment and discover the strategies that work for you. Take a look at our top suggestions below to help you enjoy a deep, restorative sleep every night.

1 Establish a routine

Your body works on a sleep-wake cycle known as the circadian rhythm. This cycle loves the consistency of a routine, as it can be quite sensitive to change. By adopting a regular nightly routine, you are clearly indicating to your body when it's time for bed, allowing it the opportunity to prepare for a restful night of sleep. Establishing a set bed and wake time, as well as incorporating wind-down rituals – such as putting on your pyjamas, making a cup of herbal tea, taking a bath or even just brushing your teeth – are great ways to prime your body for a restful night.

2 Manage your intake of stimulants

Studies suggest that consumption of stimulants such as caffeine and sugar can cause sleep issues for several hours afterwards. If you're struggling to sleep, reducing or eliminating your intake of these things by noon can be a great first step. Consider switching to decaf or herbal teas after midday. If you're craving a sweet treat, opt for something wholesome, like a piece of fruit.

3 Go easy on bedtime snacks

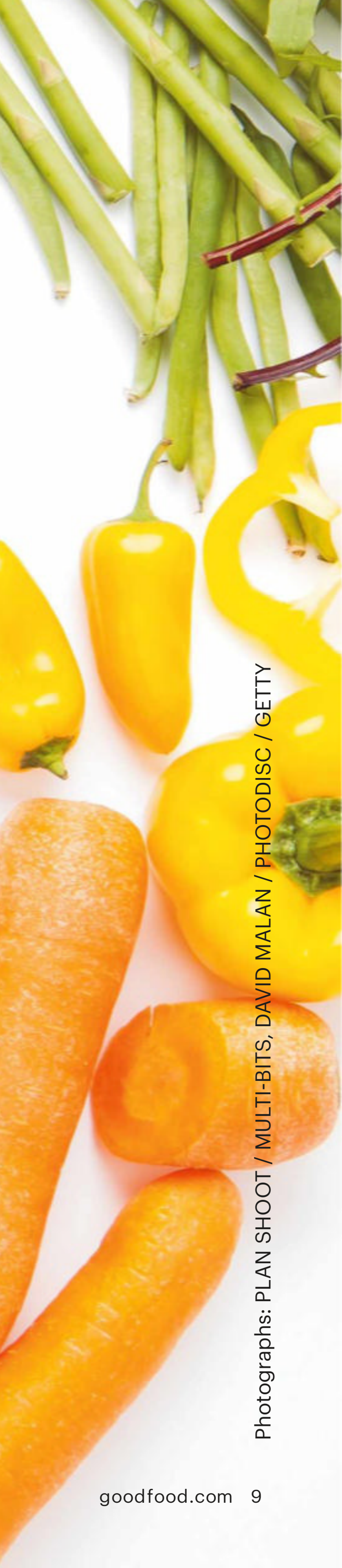
Eating large quantities of food before bed can throw off your sleep. Food's primary function is to create energy, so if you're eating a lot before bed, you're stimulating your digestion, which can lead to sleep disruption for some. Ideally, your last meal should be at least two to three hours before bed to allow sufficient time for digestion. With that said, you don't want to go to sleep hungry either, so if you do require a light snack, choose one with protein and carbohydrates, which support the creation of the sleep hormone melatonin.

4 Choose the right light

Light is a huge factor when it comes to supporting or inhibiting the production of melatonin. To support your sleep-wake cycle, aim to get at least 30 minutes of sunlight each day. At night, your room should be as dark as possible. Eye masks and blackout curtains can be useful here, as well as limiting your screen time closer to bed. Devices such as laptops and tablets emit blue light, which can disrupt the creation of melatonin. Instead, if you must use your device late into the evening, consider downloading a light-changing app that can switch your screen backlight from blue to red, which is less disruptive.

5 Optimise your sleep environment

Creating a pleasant environment for sleeping is an important consideration for healthy rest. Choosing a supportive mattress, suitable pillow and breathable sheets can go a long way to providing a cosy, comfortable setting that will help you get a good night of well-earned rest.



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Budget healthy diet plan

Our seven-day plan spotlights low-cost ingredients, low-waste recipes and energy-efficient cooking methods. As always, the meals are nutritionally balanced, providing all you need to re-energise, reduce your sugar intake and lose excess weight so you can feel your best.

Along with providing nutritious inspiration for a variety of dietary requirements, this year's plan is focused on cost – so you'll find recipes that don't require expensive ingredients, lots of equipment or energy-intensive cooking methods. We've also concentrated on storecupboard and freezer-friendly items, while reducing the number of ingredients you need overall, so you can buy in bulk to keep costs down.

The secret to success is preparation. That's why we suggest using the Saturday before you start the plan to shop for ingredients and do some food prep. We've also cut down the time you'll spend in the kitchen – the majority of recipes serve four or more so you'll only need to cook once, then enjoy leftovers for an easy lunch or dinner on another day.

WHAT MAKES THE PLAN HEALTHY?

Achieving the right nutrition through a healthy, balanced diet can improve your mood, support energy levels and help you think more clearly. Based on that, our plans are packed with colourful fruit and veg, and include the right quantities to ensure they provide at least all of your five-a-day. Also at the top of our list are minimally processed ingredients that provide healthy fats, lean proteins and slow-release carbs in the form of fibre-rich wholegrains and pulses, plus fermented ingredients like live yogurt. A combination of these is associated with several positive health effects, including better digestion, a stronger immune system and an improved mindset, so you can expect to feel brighter, sharper and more energised.

Our recipes have been analysed without additional salt. Spices and herbs provide layers of flavour, but if you do want to season with salt, do so in moderation.

This seven-day plan provides between 1,200 and 1,500 calories per day for a moderate shortfall, allowing for steady, controlled weight loss where desired. However, if that isn't your goal or your lifestyle requires a higher calorie intake, you can find lots of healthy snacks at *goodfood.com/recipes/collection/healthy-snack-recipes*.

As with any lifestyle or diet change, we encourage you to speak to your GP if you have any concerns or health issues before following our plans. If you're vegetarian, turn to page 19 to see our meat-free plan. For our vegan plan, visit *goodfood.com/recipes/collection/healthy-diet-plan-vegan-recipes*.

What to eat when you exercise

Staying active is key for overall physical and mental wellbeing. We've highlighted recipes that are especially useful if you follow an exercise plan – just look for the shoe symbol, above. For resistance training, protein is key for supporting muscle repair, and for cardio and endurance training, you'll need some energising carbs to replenish glycogen stores, as well as protein to aid recovery. It is also important to stay hydrated. For more information on the benefits of exercise, take a look at *goodfood.com/howto/guide/active-diet-plan*.

Your 7-day plan for two

	BREAKFAST	LUNCH	DINNER
Sunday	Smoky mushroom & potato hash with oaty thins, p13	Carrot & lentil soup with feta, p16	Whole roast chicken with braised veg & peas, p18
Monday	Porridge with grated apple, p12	Carrot & lentil soup with feta, p16	Whole roast chicken with braised veg & peas, p18
Tuesday	Porridge with grated apple, p12	Spiced chicken egg wraps, p18	Cod & olive tagine with brown rice, p17
Wednesday	Crunchy peanut butter & banana pots, p13	Curried noodles, p14	Sardine kedgeree, p15
Thursday	Crunchy peanut butter & banana pots, p13	Spinach & tuna omelette, p15	Cod & olive tagine with brown rice, p17
Friday	Porridge with grated apple, p12	Carrot & lentil soup with feta, p16	One-pot pepper pasta, p17
Saturday	Crunchy peanut butter & banana pots, p13	Sardine kedgeree, p15	One-pot pepper pasta, p17

Start the day right

Enjoy these easy-to-prepare breakfasts to keep you fuelled until lunchtime

Porridge with grated apple

That old saying about an apple a day keeping the doctor away has truth to it. Apples are packed with health-promoting nutrients, including fibre, which helps lower blood fats, manage blood sugar and keep your good gut bacteria happy. On the plan, you'll be eating this speedy breakfast three times during the week, but it is tastiest when made fresh each morning.

SERVES 2 **PREP** 10 mins
COOK 5 mins **EASY** V

VEGAN FIBRE 1 OF 5-A-DAY

85g porridge oats
½ tsp ground cinnamon, plus extra to serve (optional)
250ml fortified soya milk, plus 4 tbsp to serve
2 small apples
15g raisins
7-8 walnut halves (about 15g), broken

1 Tip the oats and cinnamon into a non-stick pan and pour in the soya milk plus 150ml water. Put the pan over a gentle heat. Once bubbling, simmer for 5 mins, stirring frequently (soya milk has a tendency to stick), until the porridge has thickened.

2 While the porridge cooks, grate the apples, including the skin. Hold the apple with the stalk facing up and coarsely grate until you reach the core, then turn and grate again, continuing to grate and turn until you are left with just the cores.

3 Serve the porridge with the apple, raisins and nuts on top. Stir through the extra soya milk to loosen, and sprinkle with extra cinnamon, if you like.

GOOD TO KNOW vegan • healthy • fibre • 1 of 5-a-day
PER SERVING 333 kcals • fat 12g • saturates 2g • carbs 43g • sugars 14g • fibre 6g • protein 11g • salt 0.02g

£0.97 per serving

£1.08
per serving

Smoky mushroom & potato hash with oaty thins

The biscuity thins here offer a great contrast in texture to the hash and eggs, and also pack in cholesterol-busting oats.

SERVES 2 **PREP** 10 mins
COOK 30 mins **EASY** **V**

FOLATE VIT C IRON

100g porridge oats
70ml fortified soya milk
½ tsp baking powder

For the hash

2 medium potatoes (275g), unpeeled, cut into thin wedges
2 tbsp rapeseed oil
160g mushrooms, thickly sliced
1 red onion, roughly chopped
1 tsp smoked paprika
4 vine tomatoes, halved
2 eggs

1 Tip the oats and soya milk into a bowl and blitz with a hand blender to break down the oats to a less coarse texture. Leave for 10 mins to soak.

2 Meanwhile, boil the potatoes for 5 mins, then drain. Heat the oil in a large non-stick frying pan over a medium heat and cook the mushrooms, onion and paprika for a few minutes, until softened. Tip in the potatoes and cook for 10 mins, turning the mixture over every now and then. Stir in the tomatoes and leave to cook for 5 mins more.

3 The oaty mixture should be stiff by now. Work in the baking powder, then divide the mixture in half. Wet your hands, then press out half on a plastic chopping board to make a thin disc, like a pancake. Carefully lift it off with a palette knife and cook in a dry non-stick frying pan for 2 mins on each side. Repeat with the other half of the mixture. While the second one cooks, push the potato mixture to the side in the other pan, break in the eggs and cook until the whites are set and the yolks are runny. Serve the oat thins topped with the hash and eggs.

GOOD TO KNOW healthy • folate • fibre • vit c • iron • 3 of 5-a-day
PER SERVING 572 kcals • fat 22g • saturates 3g • carbs 67g • sugars 11g • fibre 11g • protein 21g • salt 0.58g

£0.98
per serving

Crunchy peanut butter & banana pots

Peanut butter and banana is a winning combination in terms of texture and flavour. Bananas are also a useful source of potassium, which is helpful if you have high blood pressure. What's more, eating fermented foods, like yogurt, is good for gut health.

MAKES 6 **PREP** 10 mins plus cooling and overnight chilling
COOK 5 mins **EASY** **V**

VEGAN HEALTHY FIBRE

300g porridge oats
2 tsp cinnamon, plus extra for sprinkling
2 medium bananas, finely chopped
500g pot fortified soya yogurt
80g crunchy peanut butter

1 Tip the oats and cinnamon into a large pan. Add 1.3 litres of water, then bring to the boil and cook over a low heat until the oats are cooked and the mixture has thickened. Stir in the chopped bananas, cook for 1 min, then take the pan off the heat. Leave to cool for a few minutes, then stir in 6 tbsp of the soya yogurt.

2 Beat the peanut butter into the remaining yogurt until well combined. Divide half the oat mixture into the base of six glass tumblers and spoon in half of the nutty yogurt. Top with the rest of the oat mixture, then the remaining yogurt mixture to create clear layers. *Will keep covered and chilled for up to four days.*

3 To serve, dust generously with cinnamon.

GOOD TO KNOW vegan • healthy • fibre
PER SERVING 356 kcals • fat 13g • saturates 2g • carbs 43g • sugars 8g • fibre 7g • protein 13g • salt 0.33g

Hearty and wholesome

To keep prep to a minimum, several of these main meals create leftovers you can enjoy another day

£1.02
per serving

Curried noodles

You may have seen it reported that a wider variety of plant-based foods – ideally 30 per week – is the key to gut health. If that's your goal, this is the recipe for you. It's packed with vegetables, wholewheat, pulses and spices, and you'll be in double numbers before you know it.

SERVES 2 **PREP** 5 mins
COOK 10 mins **EASY** **V**

HEALTHY VIT C FIBRE

150g dried wholewheat noodles
2 tsp rapeseed oil
1 red pepper, sliced
1 carrot, cut into matchsticks
1 tbsp finely chopped ginger
3 garlic cloves, finely chopped
1 chilli, deseeded and finely chopped (optional)
½ tsp cumin seeds
1-2 tsp curry powder
2½-3 tbsp crunchy peanut butter
1 tbsp tomato purée
150m vegetable stock, made with ½ tsp vegetable bouillon
100g frozen peas
½ lemon, juiced

1 Cook the noodles in boiling water following pack instructions, then rinse well to ensure the strands are separated. Meanwhile, heat the oil in a wok or sauté pan over a high heat and stir-fry the pepper, carrot, ginger, garlic and chilli, if using, for 5 mins, until softened. Stir in the cumin seeds and curry powder and cook for 30 seconds or so until aromatic.

2 Mix the peanut butter and tomato purée with the vegetable stock until smooth. Add the drained noodles to the wok along with the frozen peas, then pour in the peanut and tomato mixture and toss everything together. If it seems a bit claggy, stir in a drop more water. Squeeze in the lemon juice, toss well and serve.

GOOD TO KNOW vegan • healthy • fibre • vit c • 3 of 5-a-day

PER SERVING 522 kcals • fat 16g • saturates 3g • carbs 67g • sugars 14g • fibre 16g • protein 20g • salt 1.1g

£1.17
per serving

Sardine kedgeree

If you're after an inexpensive and healthy source of omega-3, try canned sardines. You can eat the bones too – they become crisp during cooking, and will help top up your calcium levels. If you'd rather not, the fillets are easy to pull apart so you can discard them.

SERVES 4 **PREP** 10 mins
COOK 35 mins **EASY**

CALCIUM IRON OMEGA 3

- 2 eggs
- 3 x 120g cans sardines in sunflower oil, 2 tbsp oil reserved
- 2 onions, finely chopped
- 1 tbsp finely chopped ginger
- 1 chilli, deseeded and chopped
- 300g easy-cook brown rice
- 2 tbsp medium curry powder
- 1 tsp cumin seeds
- 650ml hot vegetable stock, made with 1 tsp vegetable bouillon powder
- 400g frozen spinach
- ⅓ pack coriander, chopped
- ½ lemon, cut into wedges

1 Boil the eggs for 8 mins, then leave them to cool until you can comfortably peel them. Meanwhile, heat the reserved oil from the canned sardines in a large pan, then fry the onions, ginger and chilli for 10 mins, stirring frequently, until softened and golden.

2 Add the rice, curry powder and cumin seeds, then pour in the stock. Stir well, then add the frozen spinach blocks, spaced apart, on top. Don't stir at this stage, just cover and leave to cook over a low heat for 15 mins. Add the sardines, then cover and cook for 5 mins more, until the rice is tender.

3 Add the coriander then gently toss everything together. Cut the eggs into wedges, then serve on top along with the lemon wedges for squeezing over. Serve half, then leave the remainder to cool before chilling. *Will keep chilled for up to three days. Reheat everything except the lemon wedges in a pan or in the microwave until piping hot.*

GOOD TO KNOW healthy • calcium • fibre • iron • omega-3 • 2 of 5-a-day • gluten free
PER SERVING 542 kcals • fat 18g • saturates 3g • carbs 61g • sugars 6g • fibre 9g • protein 30g • salt 1.2g

£1.73
per serving

Spinach & tuna omelette

Rich in nutrients and inexpensive, eggs can be a saviour. When you cook this omelette, remember to take the spinach out of the freezer in time for it to completely defrost.

SERVES 2 **PREP** 10 mins
COOK 30 mins **EASY**

LOW CAL VIT C FOLATE

- 85g wholemeal penne
- frozen spinach (use what you have left in the pack after making the sardine kedgeree (left); once thawed and squeezed it should be around 185-200g), roughly chopped
- 3 garlic cloves, finely grated
- 1 tsp smoked paprika, plus an extra pinch to serve
- 6 pitted green olives, sliced
- 4 eggs
- 145g can tuna in spring water, drained
- 1 tsp rapeseed oil

For the salad

- 1 red onion, thinly sliced
- ½ lemon, juiced
- 2 tomatoes, cut into thin wedges
- 20g feta, crumbled
- a few thyme leaves, to serve (optional)

1 For the salad, put the red onion and lemon juice in a bowl and scrunch together with your hands. Set aside.

2 Meanwhile, cook the penne following pack instructions. Drain and rinse under cold running water, then drain again thoroughly. Tip into a bowl and mix with the spinach, garlic, paprika, olives and eggs. Fold in the tuna.

3 Heat the oil in a 20cm non-stick frying pan. Tip in the egg, spinach and pasta mixture, cover and cook over a gentle heat for about 10 mins, until set. Turn out onto a plate and slide back into the pan to cook the other side for 5 mins. Serve topped with the red onion, tomato and feta, and sprinkle with a little extra paprika and a few thyme leaves, if you like. Cut into wedges to serve.

GOOD TO KNOW healthy • low cal • calcium • folate • fibre • vit c • iron • 3 of 5-a-day
PER SERVING 486 kcals • fat 18g • saturates 5g • carbs 36g • sugars 8g • fibre 10g • protein 39g • salt 1g

88p per serving

Carrot & lentil soup with feta

Lentils are filling, making this a hearty lunch They're also rich in protein and fibre, and a good source of B vitamins and iron. Low iron levels can reduce your energy, lower your immune defences and affect your concentration. This recipe provides three lunches, and leftovers freeze well.

SERVES 6 **PREP** 15 mins
COOK 35 mins **EASY** **V**

LOW CAL IRON FIBRE

- 2 tbsp rapeseed oil
- 3 onions, chopped
- 5 garlic cloves, chopped
- 750g carrots, sliced
- 1 tbsp smoked paprika
- 1 tbsp ground coriander
- 1 tbsp thyme leaves
- 300g red lentils
- 1.3 litres hot vegetable stock, made with 2 tsp bouillon powder
- 2 x 400g cans chickpeas
- 150g feta, crumbled

1 Heat the oil in a large pan over a medium heat and fry the onions for 10 mins, stirring frequently, until starting to turn golden. Add the garlic and carrots and cook for a few minutes more, then stir in the spices, thyme and lentils.

2 Pour in the stock, cover and simmer for 20 mins, until the lentils are pulpy and tender. Remove from the heat and roughly blitz using a hand blender – you don't want it to be completely smooth. Stir in the chickpeas plus the liquid from the cans and reheat the soup. Serve two bowls straight away, each topped with 25g of the crumbled feta. *Leave the remaining soup to cool before keeping chilled for up to four days. Reheat in a pan over a low heat until piping hot, then scatter over 25g of the remaining feta for each portion.*

GOOD TO KNOW low cal • fibre • iron • 4 of 5-a-day • gluten free
PER SERVING 454 kcals • fat 13g • saturates 4g • carbs 53g • sugars 12g • fibre 14g • protein 24g • salt 1.5g

£1.55
per serving

One-pot pepper pasta

This satisfying meal only needs a little effort for big flavour. If you have mushrooms left over from Sunday's breakfast, you can slice and add them here if you like, plus you can swap the pasta and bouillon for gluten-free equivalents, if needed.

SERVES 4 **PREP** 15 mins
COOK 45 mins **EASY**

HEALTHY · VIT C · LOW CAL

- 2 tbsp rapeseed oil
- 2 onions, chopped
- 500g 5%-fat beef steak mince
- 2 peppers, finely chopped
- 3 garlic cloves, chopped
- 1 tbsp thyme leaves
- 2 tbsp smoked paprika
- 400g can chopped tomatoes
- 2 tbsp tomato purée
- 800ml hot vegetable stock, made with 2 tsp bouillon powder
- 180g wholemeal penne

1 Heat the oil in a large lidded pan over a medium heat and fry the onions for 10 mins, stirring frequently, until golden. Add the mince, breaking apart any lumps with a wooden spoon. Stir in the peppers and cook for 5 mins.

2 Add the garlic, thyme and paprika and stir well. Tip in the tomatoes, tomato purée and stock and bring to the boil. Reduce the heat and simmer, covered, for 10 mins.

3 Tip in the penne, put the lid back on and bring back to the boil. Reduce the heat again and simmer for another 12 mins, until the penne is tender. Leave to stand for 5 mins, then divide half the pasta between two plates and serve. *Leave the remainder to cool, then keep chilled for up to four days. Reheat in a pan over a low heat with a splash of water until piping hot.*

GOOD TO KNOW healthy • low cal • fibre • vit c • iron • 3 of 5-a-day
PER SERVING 454 kcals • fat 13g • saturates 3g • carbs 44g • sugars 14g • fibre 11g • protein 34g • salt 1g

£1.87
per serving

Cod & olive tagine with brown rice

With its mild flavour, cod works brilliantly in this delicately spiced, aromatic dish. Like other seafood, cod is a useful source of iodine. Although we only need this mineral in trace amounts, it's essential for healthy thyroid function.

SERVES 4 **PREP** 15 mins
COOK 55 mins **EASY**

GLUTEN FREE · LOW FAT · IRON

- 3 tbsp rapeseed oil
- 2 red onions, chopped
- 250g swede, finely chopped
- 2 carrots, finely chopped
- 3 strips of lemon peel, finely chopped
- 4 garlic cloves, thinly sliced
- 1 tsp ground cinnamon
- 1 tsp cumin seeds
- 2 tsp ground coriander
- 400g can chopped tomatoes
- 2 tbsp tomato purée
- 300ml vegetable stock, made with 1½ tsp bouillon powder
- 12 pitted green olives, halved lengthways
- 250g easy-cook brown rice
- 4 frozen skinless cod fillets (about 360g)
- ⅓ pack of coriander, chopped

1 Heat the oil in a large pan over a medium heat and fry the onions, swede, carrots, lemon peel and garlic for 10 mins, stirring frequently. Add the spices and stir briefly.

2 Stir in the tomatoes, tomato purée, stock and olives. Cover and cook for 25 mins.

3 Cook the rice following pack instructions. Stir the tomato mixture well, then nestle in the frozen cod fillets. Cover and cook for 20 mins, until the cod is cooked through. Scatter over the coriander. Serve half with half the cooked rice. *Leave the rest of the tagine and rice to cool, then keep chilled for up to three days. Reheat the tagine in a pan over a low heat until piping hot, and reheat the rice in the microwave until completely heated through.*

GOOD TO KNOW healthy • low fat • low cal • fibre • vit c • iron • 4 of 5-a-day • gluten free
PER SERVING 428 kcals • fat 12g • saturates 1g • carbs 56g • sugars 13g • fibre 9g • protein 19g • salt 1.1g

£1.67
per serving

Whole roast chicken with braised veg & peas

Buying a whole chicken is budget-friendly as it provides leftovers for the week. Roasting the swede, potato and leeks at the same time makes the most of having the oven on too. Swede is rich in glucosinolates – compounds that may help fight signs of skin ageing.

SERVES 4 **PREP** 10 mins
COOK 1 hr 30 mins **EASY**

FOLATE · FIBRE · 3 OF 5-A-DAY

800g potatoes, thinly sliced
1 large leek, sliced
1 tbsp thyme leaves, plus the stalks
4 garlic cloves, chopped
500g swede, thinly sliced
450ml vegetable stock, made with 2 tsp bouillon powder
1 tbsp rapeseed oil
1.3kg whole chicken
320g frozen peas

1 Heat the oven to 200C/180C fan/gas 6. Mix the potato, leek, thyme leaves, garlic and swede in a deep roasting tin. Pour in the stock and brush the veg with the oil. Roast for 20 mins.

2 Put the thyme stalks in the chicken cavity. After 20 mins, sit the chicken on top of the veg and roast for 1 hr, until cooked through. After 30 mins, check the potatoes – add 150ml water if they've started to catch. Once cooked, transfer the chicken to a board to rest for 10 mins. Meanwhile, cook half the peas following pack instructions.

3 Carve off the chicken legs and remove the skin, then serve with half the roast veg and the peas. *Leave the remaining chicken and veg to cool, then keep chilled for up to three days. To prepare the leftovers, remove the skin from one of the breasts, and reheat it with the veg in the microwave until piping hot. Cook the remaining peas following pack instructions. Slice the breast and serve with the veg. Use the final breast for the egg wraps (see recipe, right).*

GOOD TO KNOW healthy • folate • fibre • vit c • iron • 3 of 5-a-day • gluten free
PER SERVING 555 kcals • fat 17g • saturates 4g • carbs 45g • sugars 10g • fibre 11g • protein 51g • salt 1.1g

£1.27
per serving

Spiced chicken egg wraps

High in protein, cheap and versatile, eggs have many benefits. They're the base of these wraps, and the filling is so substantial you'll need a knife and fork to eat them.

SERVES 2 **PREP** 20 mins
COOK 15 mins **EASY**

FIBRE · 3 OF 5-A-DAY · VIT C

1 red onion, thinly sliced
1 lemon, juiced

For the filling
400g can black beans
2 tsp tomato purée
½ tsp smoked paprika
1 tsp ground coriander
½ tsp vegetable bouillon powder
200g cooked skinless chicken breast, sliced (use what's left from the roast chicken, left)
⅓ pack coriander, chopped
2 tomatoes, cut into thin wedges

For the wraps
4 eggs
½ tsp smoked paprika
½ tsp cumin seeds
1 tsp rapeseed oil

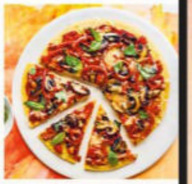
1 Put the red onion and lemon in a bowl and scrunch together using your hands. Set aside. For the filling, drain the beans, leaving a little liquid in the can. Tip into a bowl and mash with the tomato purée, spices and bouillon. Top with the chicken, cover and heat through in the microwave for 4 mins.

2 For the wraps, beat 2 eggs with half the paprika and cumin seeds. Heat the oil in a 20cm non-stick frying pan over a medium heat. Tip in the egg mix and cook undisturbed for about 5 mins until set (no need to turn it). Remove to a plate and repeat with the remaining eggs and spices.

3 Spoon the warm bean mixture down the centre of the egg wraps. Top with half the coriander and the warm chicken, tomatoes and onions, then scatter with the remaining coriander. Drizzle over any lemon juice from the onions and serve straight away.

GOOD TO KNOW healthy • folate • fibre • vit c • 3 of 5-a-day • gluten free
PER SERVING 513 kcals • fat 18g • saturates 5g • carbs 28g • sugars 9g • fibre 13g • protein 53g • salt 1g

Your 7-day *vegetarian* plan for two

	BREAKFAST		LUNCH		DINNER	
Sunday	Smoky mushroom & potato hash with oaty thins, p13		Corn, coconut & lentil chowder, p22		Veggie pasta one-pot, p21	
Monday	Crunchy peanut butter & banana pots, p13		Corn, coconut & lentil chowder, p22		Veggie pasta one-pot, p21	
Tuesday	Porridge with grated apple, p12		Lemon & spinach rice with feta, p23		Pepper & mushroom socca pizza, p20	
Wednesday	Porridge with grated apple, p12		Lemon & spinach rice with feta, p23		Pepper & mushroom socca pizza, p20	
Thursday	Crunchy peanut butter & banana pots, p13		Corn, coconut & lentil chowder, p22		Oven-baked bhajis, p22	
Friday	Porridge with grated apple, p12		One-pan spinach, eggs & tomatoes, p21		Oven-baked bhajis, p22	
Saturday	Crunchy peanut butter & banana pots, p13		One-pan spinach, eggs & tomatoes, p21		Warm cauliflower salad, p23	

Meat-free meals

£1.05 per serving

Pepper & mushroom socca pizza

This is best made fresh each time, but the base, made with gram (chickpea) flour, is quicker to make than a yeasted one. It's also gluten-free and contributes to your five-a-day.

SERVES 2 **PREP** 10 mins
COOK 20 mins **EASY** **V**

LOW CAL VIT C FOLATE

1 tsp rapeseed oil
70g mushrooms, thinly sliced
1 pepper, thinly sliced
2 tbsp tomato purée
1 garlic clove, finely grated
2 tomatoes, chopped
30g grated mature cheddar
2 tbsp chopped basil

For the base

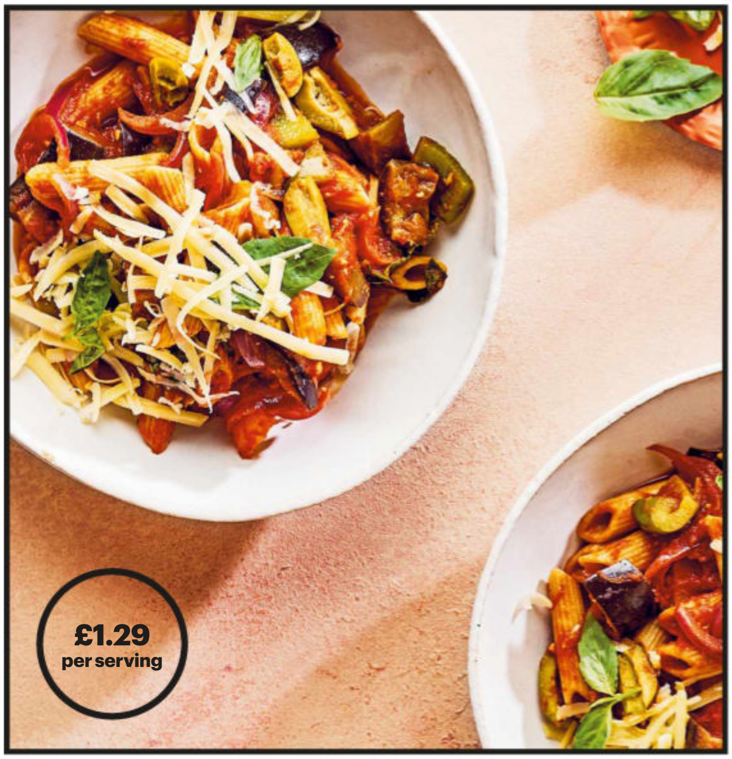
160g gram flour
1 tbsp rapeseed oil

1 Heat the oven to 200C/180C fan/gas 6. For the base, put the flour in a large bowl and whisk in 250ml water to make a batter. Heat the oil in a large, non-stick frying pan. Pour in the batter and cook over a low heat for 4-5 mins until set. Loosen with a palate knife or spatula, turn and cook for 1-2 mins on the other side.

2 Meanwhile, heat the 1 tsp oil in a pan over a medium heat and stir-fry the mushrooms and pepper for about 4-5 mins until soft. Mix the tomato purée and garlic in a bowl with 2 tbsp water, then stir in the chopped tomatoes.

3 Turn the pizza base out onto a baking tray lined with baking parchment. Spread over the tomato mixture, then scatter over the mushrooms, peppers, cheese and half the basil. Bake for 5-10 mins until the cheese has melted. Scatter with the remaining basil to serve.

GOOD TO KNOW healthy • low cal • folate • fibre • vit c • 3 of 5-a-day • gluten free
PER SERVING 481 kcals • fat 17g • saturates 4g • carbs 52g • sugars 9g • fibre 12g • protein 25g • salt 0.3g



Veggie pasta one-pot

Cut down on the washing-up by cooking everything in the same pot here – even the pasta. Just a few tomatoes and peppers give you a lot of nutritional benefits – half a pepper qualifies as one of your five-a-day and is packed with vitamin C.

SERVES 4 **PREP** 15 mins
COOK 40 mins **EASY** V

LOW CAL · VIT C · 4 OF 5-A-DAY

- 2 tbsp rapeseed oil
- 3 red onions, sliced
- 2 peppers (we used orange and green), sliced
- 1 large aubergine, finely chopped
- 4 large garlic cloves, chopped
- 2 tbsp smoked paprika
- 500g passata
- 1 litre hot vegetable stock, made with 2 tsp bouillon powder
- 280g wholemeal penne
- 10g basil, chopped
- 10 pitted green olives, quartered
- 90g extra-mature cheddar

1 Heat the oil in a large pan over a medium heat and fry the onions for 10 mins, stirring often, until golden. Add the peppers, aubergine, garlic, paprika, passata and stock. Cover and simmer for 10 mins.

2 Stir in the penne, bring back to the boil, then reduce the heat and cook, covered, for 12-15 mins until the penne is tender. Stir in the basil and olives, then remove from the heat and leave to stand for 5 mins. Divide half the pasta between two plates and grate over half the cheese to serve. *Leave the remaining pasta to cool completely, then keep chilled for up to four days. To serve, tip into a pan along with a splash of water and reheat over a low heat until piping hot, then grate over the remaining cheese.*

GOOD TO KNOW healthy • low cal • fibre • vit c • 4 of 5-a-day
PER SERVING 499 kcals • fat 17g • saturates 6g • carbs 62g • sugars 16g • fibre 16g • protein 17g • salt 1.4g

£1.25
per serving

One-pan spinach, eggs & tomatoes

This lunch is packed with nutrients and protein. Tomatoes are a rich source of the phytonutrient lycopene, which is an antioxidant, and cooking the tomatoes helps our bodies absorb it more easily.

SERVES 4 **PREP** 10 mins
COOK 55 mins **EASY** V

5 OF 5-A-DAY · VIT C · GLUTEN FREE

- 1 tbsp olive oil
- 2 onions, thinly sliced
- 4 garlic cloves, chopped
- 1½ tbsp smoked paprika
- 500g passata
- 500ml vegetable stock, made with 2 tsp bouillon powder
- 150g red lentils
- 400g frozen spinach
- 400g can borlotti beans
- 10g basil, chopped
- 2 tomatoes, cut into wedges
- 8 eggs

1 Heat the oil in a large, deep frying pan over a medium heat and fry the onions for 10 mins, stirring occasionally, until softened. Stir in the garlic and paprika, then the passata, stock, lentils and spinach. Bring to the boil, cover, reduce the heat and simmer for 25-35 mins until the lentils are tender.

2 Stir in the beans along with the liquid from the can, then the basil and tomatoes. Remove half the mixture and set aside. Make four gaps in the remaining mixture with a spoon and crack an egg into each. Cover and cook over a low heat for 5 mins, until the eggs are set.

3 Serve half the lentil mixture with the four eggs. *Leave the reserved mixture to cool completely, then keep chilled for up to three days. To serve, reheat in a smaller pan with a splash of water, then cook the remaining eggs as you did in step two, above.*

GOOD TO KNOW healthy • low cal • calcium • folate • fibre • vit c • iron • 5 of 5-a-day • gluten free
PER SERVING 476 kcals • fat 15g • saturates 3g • carbs 43g • sugars 13g • fibre 16g • protein 34g • salt 1.3g

£1.25
per serving

85p
per serving

Oven-baked bhajis

SERVES 4 **PREP** 15 mins
COOK 30 mins **EASY** **V**

LOW FAT · VIT C · IRON

80g gram flour
1 tbsp medium curry powder
1 tsp cumin seeds
1 tsp ground turmeric
½ tsp vegetable bouillon powder
1 tbsp tomato purée
2 eggs
1 large carrot, coarsely grated
2-3 onions, thinly sliced
2 tbsp chopped ginger
2 tsp rapeseed oil, plus extra for the tray

For the lemon rice

2 tsp rapeseed oil
150g easy-cook brown rice
½ tsp cumin seeds
½ tsp ground turmeric
½ tsp cinnamon
400ml hot vegetable stock, made with ½ tsp bouillon powder
2 thick strips of lemon peel (from the lemon in the salad, below)

For the salad

70g coconut yogurt
½ lemon, juiced
400g can chickpeas, drained
⅓ pack of coriander, chopped
4 tomatoes, chopped
170g carrots, cut into thin strips or coarsely grated
1 red chilli, deseeded and chopped (optional)

1 Heat the oven to 200C/180C fan/gas 6. Mix the flour with the spices and bouillon, and the tomato purée with the eggs. Toss the carrot, onion and ginger in the flour mix. Add the egg mix and combine, then stir in the oil.
2 Oil a large baking tray. Spoon on 12 neat mounds of batter. Bake for 20-25 mins until golden.
3 Meanwhile, make the rice. Heat the oil in a pan over a medium heat and fry the rice and spices for 1 min. Add the stock and lemon peel. Simmer for 20-25 mins until the rice is tender and the liquid has been absorbed.
4 Mix the salad ingredients together. Serve half the bhajis and rice with half the salad. *Cool the remaining bhajis and rice and keep chilled with the rest of the salad for up to three days. Reheat the bhajis at 180C/160C fan/gas 4 for 10-15 mins until piping hot. Reheat the rice in the microwave. Serve with the salad.*

GOOD TO KNOW healthy • low fat • low cal • folate • fibre • vit c • iron • 4 of 5-a-day • gluten free
PER SERVING 480 kcals • fat 12g • saturates 3g • carbs 68g • sugars 15g • fibre 14g • protein 18g • salt 0.6g

Corn, coconut & lentil chowder

Some coconut yogurts contain less saturated fat than coconut milk, while still adding creamy flavour and texture. Lentils, onions and sweetcorn give this dish valuable fibre, which is essential for a healthy digestive system.

SERVES 6 **PREP** 10 mins
COOK 45 mins **EASY** **V**

FIBRE · GLUTEN FREE · HEALTHY

1 tbsp rapeseed oil
2 onions, chopped
4 garlic cloves, chopped
2 red chillies, deseeded and chopped
2 tbsp medium curry powder
2 tsp cumin seeds
2 tsp ground turmeric
250g red lentils
2 litres vegetable stock, made with 3 tsp bouillon powder
600g frozen sweetcorn
600g potatoes, cut into small cubes
280g coconut yogurt
10g coriander, chopped

1 Heat the oil in a large pan over a medium heat and fry the onions for 8 mins, stirring often, until softened. Stir in the garlic, chillies, curry powder, cumin seeds, turmeric and lentils, and cook for a few minutes more, still stirring. Pour in the stock and sweetcorn. Bring to the boil, then cover, reduce the heat and simmer for 15-20 mins, or until the lentils are tender.
2 Remove from the heat and briefly blitz the soup using a hand blender – you don't want it to be completely smooth. Add the potatoes, then cover and return to a medium heat for 10-15 mins more, or until the potatoes are tender. Take off the heat and stir in the yogurt and coriander.
3 Serve two bowlfuls straight away. *Leave the rest of the soup to cool completely, then keep chilled for up to four days. Reheat in a pan over a low heat until piping hot.*

GOOD TO KNOW vegan • healthy • low fat • low cal • fibre • vit c • iron • 3 of 5-a-day • gluten free
PER SERVING 361 kcals • fat 8g • saturates 5g • carbs 50g • sugars 8g • fibre 10g • protein 17g • salt 0.9g

£1.10
per serving

Lemon & spinach rice with feta

Spinach is bursting with nutrients, including vitamin K, which is important for our skin, hair and bone health.

SERVES 4 **PREP** 10 mins
COOK 40 mins **EASY V**

HEALTHY FIBRE CALCIUM

- 1 tbsp rapeseed oil
- 2 onions, finely chopped
- 3 large garlic cloves, sliced
- 300g easy-cook brown rice
- 700ml hot vegetable stock, made with 1 tsp bouillon powder
- 400g frozen spinach
- 15g dill, finely chopped
- 1 lemon, zested, ½ juiced, ½ cut into 4 wedges
- 40g walnuts, chopped
- 75g feta, crumbled

1 Heat the oil in a large pan over a medium heat and fry the onions and garlic for 10 mins, stirring often, until softened.
2 Tip in the rice, stock, spinach and half the dill and lemon zest. Cover, reduce the heat to low and cook for 25 mins, until the rice is tender.
3 Scatter over the nuts, feta and remaining dill and lemon zest, then gently toss together along with the lemon juice. Serve half of the rice straight away with two lemon wedges on the side for squeezing over. *Leave the rest of the rice to cool completely, then keep chilled for up to three days. Reheat in the microwave until piping hot, then serve with the remaining lemon wedges.*

GOOD TO KNOW healthy • low cal • calcium • fibre • vit c • 2 of 5-a-day • gluten free
PER SERVING 495 kcals • fat 17g • saturates 4g • carbs 67g • sugars 6g • fibre 8g • protein 15g • salt 0.9g

£1.85
per serving

Warm cauliflower salad

Cauliflower is a source of vitamin C, and as a member of the cruciferous family (which includes broccoli, cabbage, sprouts and kale), it also contains sulphur-based substances thought to help the liver filter toxins and protect against certain cancers.

SERVES 2 **PREP** 15 mins
COOK 30 mins **EASY V**

FOLATE IRON FIBRE

- 320g cauliflower, broken into florets
- 1 red pepper, sliced
- 1 tbsp rapeseed oil
- 1 red onion, thinly sliced
- 1 lemon, zested and juiced
- 15g raisins
- 35g walnuts, roughly chopped or broken into chunks
- 1 red chilli, deseeded and chopped
- 15g dill, chopped

For the hummus

- 400g can butter beans
- 1 small garlic clove, sliced
- ½ tsp smoked paprika
- ½ tbsp rapeseed oil

1 Heat the oven to 200C/180C fan/gas 6. Put the cauliflower and pepper in a roasting tray and rub all over with ½ tbsp of the oil. Roast for 30 mins, until tender.
2 Put the onion and all but 1 tbsp of the lemon juice in a bowl and scrunch together with your hands to start softening the onions. Add the raisins, walnuts and chilli, then set aside.
3 For the hummus, drain the beans, reserving the liquid from the can. Tip the beans into a food processor along with the garlic, paprika, oil and reserved lemon juice. Add 2 tbsp of the reserved bean liquid and blitz until smooth.
4 Spread the hummus over two plates. Toss the roasted veg with the onions, remaining oil, half the lemon zest and the dill. Spoon on top of the hummus and scatter with the remaining lemon zest to serve.

GOOD TO KNOW vegan • healthy • folate • fibre • vit c • iron • 4 of 5-a-day • gluten free
PER SERVING 443 kcals • fat 23g • saturates 2g • carbs 37g • sugars 19g • fibre 16g • protein 17g • salt 0.06g

All about the 5:2 diet

Take a deep dive into the popular 5:2 diet. Find out why it helps with weight loss and why some people prefer it to other fasting diets

> “The body switches from the ready supply of energy from food to burning its fat stores”

What is the 5:2 diet?

The 5:2 diet is a popular intermittent energy restriction method of weight management. It promotes eating what you want for five days of the week, then dramatically cutting calories for the other two. This part-time dieting approach focuses more on *how* you eat than *what* you eat.

How does the 5:2 diet work?

The theory behind the diet is that after a period of hours with limited calories, the body switches from the ready supply of energy from food to burning its fat stores. The diet's simplicity, and the fact that you can eat pretty much what you like five days of the week, are key to its popularity.

Dieters are recommended to consume a 'normal' number of calories for five days, and then for two non-consecutive days, eat just 25% of their usual calorie total – in other words, 500 calories for women or 600 for men.

How to follow the 5:2 diet

There are no restrictions on the types of food you can eat, however a balanced diet is recommended.

When you're following any type of low-calorie diet, it's important to make every calorie work – this means choosing nutrient-dense foods. Try not to resort to calorie-counted ready-meals on your two restricted days, and choose lean protein and vegetables instead.

When following the diet, make sure that your non-fast days are packed with nutritious options, including fruit, vegetables, wholegrains and protein such as chicken, turkey, fish, pulses and dairy.

Fasting on two consecutive days of the week can lead to tiredness, so it's better to break your week up instead – for example by fasting on Monday and Thursday.

> You do not have to exclude any food groups and you can choose what you want to eat.

What's the evidence for 5:2?

Studies suggest that daily calorie-restriction intermittent fasts such as the 5:2 diet are as effective for weight loss as fasting on alternate days for those who are overweight and obese. Intermittent fasting regimes may also be linked with:

- improving brain function
- reducing the risk of heart disease, stroke and cancer
- improving cholesterol levels and blood-sugar control
- anti-ageing due to its possible effect on lowering levels of the hormone insulin-like growth factor 1 (IGF-1)

Do 5:2 diets work?

Studies suggest the 5:2 diet is as effective as calorie restriction for weight loss and may offer additional benefits such as improvements in fasting blood sugar and appetite management. Intermittent-fasting diets are said to be easier to follow than traditional calorie restriction – one major advantage being that you don't have to exclude any food groups and can choose what you want to eat.

As with all diets, results will vary depending on your individual circumstances and the amount of weight you have to lose. You may also need to be careful that you don't overcompensate on non-fast days.

Is the 5:2 diet healthy? Our nutritionist's view...

Fasting is a simple concept that appears to promote weight loss. Many followers see it as less of a diet and more of a way of life that can help them maintain their weight loss in the longer term. Nevertheless, some people report low energy, poor concentration and headaches or dizziness on fasting days.

Much of the emphasis on 5:2 is about fasting, but for the diet to be safe, the food consumed during the rest of the week needs to be highly nutritious. If you intend to follow the diet for a long time, you may need to consult a dietician to ensure you're not at risk of nutrient deficiencies.

Who shouldn't follow a 5:2 diet?

As with all diets, pregnant and breastfeeding women and diabetics on medication should seek medical advice before starting a restricted eating programme.

Diets like 5:2 may be unsafe for teenagers and children, who are likely to miss out on crucial nutrients needed for growth. If you have or are recovering from an eating disorder, 5:2 may be inappropriate for you.

Those on medication, especially if it needs to be taken with food at set times, should seek advice from their GP prior to commencing the diet.

These meals contain a range of nutrients, but only around 200 calories, so you can still eat nourishing food even on your 'fasting' days

Spiced carrot & lentil soup

SERVES 4 **PREP** 10 mins
COOK 15 mins **EASY** **V**

2 tsp cumin seeds
pinch chilli flakes
2 tbsp olive oil
600g carrots, washed and coarsely grated (no need to peel)
140g split red lentils
1l hot vegetable stock
125ml milk
plain yogurt and naan bread, to serve

1 Dry-fry the cumin seeds and chilli flakes in a large saucepan for 1 min, then scoop out about half with a spoon and set aside. Add the olive oil, grated carrot, lentils, stock and milk to the pan and bring to the boil. Simmer for 15 mins, until the lentils have softened.
2 Whizz the soup with a stick blender until smooth (or leave it chunky if you prefer). Season to taste, then sprinkle with the reserved toasted spices. Serve with yogurt and warmed naan breads.

GOOD TO KNOW low fat
PER SERVING 263 kcals • fat 8g • saturates 2g • carbs 31g • sugars 13g • fibre 9g • protein 11g • salt 0.91g

Paillard of chicken with lemon & herbs

Paillard is a French cooking technique where a piece of meat is pounded until thin, then cooked quickly. It's a great way to cook chicken on the barbecue.

SERVES 6 **PREP** 15 mins plus 2 hrs marinating **COOK** 5 mins **EASY**

6 skinless chicken breasts
2 tbsp olive oil
½ tbsp balsamic vinegar
140g rocket
25g parmesan
lemon wedges
For the marinade
2 garlic cloves
6 sage leaves, finely shredded
3 rosemary sprigs, leaves finely chopped
1 lemon, zested and ½ juiced
3 tbsp olive oil

1 Put each chicken breast between two sheets of cling film or baking parchment and bash until about 0.5cm thick. Transfer to a dish.
2 To make the marinade, crush the garlic with a good pinch of salt in a pestle and mortar. Add the sage and rosemary and give everything a good pounding. Stir in the lemon zest and juice, 3 tbsp olive oil and some ground black pepper. Pour the marinade over the chicken, ensuring it's well coated. Cover and chill for at least 2 hrs.
3 Heat the barbecue. Once the flames have died down, spread the coals out to an even layer. Cook the chicken for 1-2 mins on each side, or until cooked through (you can also cook the chicken in a griddle pan). Transfer to a board and leave to rest for a few mins.
4 Meanwhile, pour the 2 tbsp oil and balsamic vinegar into a large bowl. Add the rocket and season. Toss together, then shave over the parmesan. Serve the salad with the chicken, with lemon wedges for squeezing over.

GOOD TO KNOW healthy • low cal • gluten free
PER SERVING 240 kcals • fat 12g • saturates 3g • carbs 1g • sugars 1g • fibre none • protein 32g • salt 0.3g

Crispy potatoes, mushroom & eggs

SERVES 4 **PREP** 10 mins **COOK** 30 mins **EASY** **V**

500g potatoes, diced
2 shallots, sliced
1 tbsp olive oil
2 tsp dried oregano or 1 tsp fresh leaves
200g small mushrooms
4 eggs

1 Heat the oven to 200C/fan 180C/gas 6. Put the potatoes and shallots in a large, non-stick roasting tin, drizzle with the oil, sprinkle over the oregano, then mix together well. Bake for 15 mins, add the mushrooms, then cook for a further 10 mins, until the potatoes are browned and tender.
2 Make four gaps in the veg and crack an egg into each. Cook for 3-4 mins more, or until the eggs are cooked to your liking.

GOOD TO KNOW low fat
PER SERVING 218 kcals • fat 10g • saturates 2g • carbs 22g • sugars 1g • fibre 2g • protein 11g • salt 0.24g

Potato & paprika tortilla

This Spanish-style omelette is great served in wedges with a simple salad and crusty bread, or as part of a tapas-style spread.

SERVES 4 **PREP** 15 mins **COOK** 25 mins **EASY** **V**

3 tbsp olive oil
250g new potatoes, thickly sliced
1 small onion, sliced
2 garlic cloves, chopped
½ tsp smoked paprika
½ tsp dried oregano or 3 tbsp chopped parsley, plus a few parsley leaves to garnish (optional)
6 large eggs

1 Heat the oil in a deep 20cm non-stick frying pan. Fry the potatoes, onion and garlic for 10 mins, until tender. Stir in the paprika and fry for 1 min more.
2 Beat the dried or fresh herbs into the eggs, season, then pour into the pan. Stir a couple of times as the egg starts to set on the bottom of the pan, then leave alone to cook slowly over a very low heat for 10 mins, until mostly set except for the very top.
3 Carefully turn the tortilla out onto a plate, then slide back into the pan so the uncooked top is now on the bottom. Cook for 1-2 mins more, then garnish with parsley, if you like.

GOOD TO KNOW healthy
PER SERVING 241 kcals • fat 17g • saturates 4g • carbs 11g • sugars 2g • fibre 2g • protein 11g • salt 0.3g

Mushroom, spinach & potato pie

SERVES 4 **PREP** 10 mins
COOK 40 mins **EASY**

- 400g baby spinach
- 1 tbsp olive oil
- 500g mushrooms, such as chestnut, shiitake and button
- 2 garlic cloves, crushed
- 1 tbsp wholegrain mustard
- 300g cooked new potatoes, cut into bite-sized pieces
- 250ml beef stock (made from ½ a low-sodium beef stock cube)
- 1 tsp freshly grated nutmeg
- 2 heaped tbsp light crème fraîche
- 3 sheets filo pastry
- 300g each green beans and broccoli, steamed, to serve

1 Heat the oven to 200C/180C fan/gas 6. Wilt the spinach in a colander by pouring a kettle of hot water over it.

2 Heat half the oil in a large non-stick pan and fry the mushrooms over a high heat until golden. Add the garlic and cook for 1 min, then add the mustard, potatoes, stock and nutmeg. Bubble for a few mins until reduced, then season and remove from the heat. Add the crème fraîche and spinach. Pour into a pie dish and leave to cool for a few mins.

3 Brush the filo with the remaining oil. Cut the sheets into quarters, then loosely scrunch up and lay on top of the pie filling. Bake for 20-25 mins until golden. Serve the pie with the steamed green beans and broccoli.

GOOD TO KNOW healthy • low fat • folate • vit c • 2 of 5-a-day

PER SERVING 215 kcals • fat 8g • saturates 2g • carbs 29g • sugars 4g • fibre 5g • protein 9g • salt 0.77g

Griddled courgette & seafood lasagne

SERVES 4 **PREP** 10 mins
COOK 40 mins **EASY**

- 1 tsp oil
- 4 courgettes, sliced lengthways
- 1 red chilli, deseeded and finely chopped
- ½ x 680ml jar passata with onion and garlic
- 400g bag mixed seafood, defrosted if frozen
- 4 fresh lasagne sheets, halved
- 3 tbsp grated parmesan
- 3 tbsp dried breadcrumbs
- 350g green beans, to serve

1 Heat a griddle and brush a little oil on the courgettes. Cook in batches until lightly charred. Season and scatter on the chilli, then set aside.
2 Heat the oven to 200C/180C fan/gas 6. Pour a little passata into a medium-sized ovenproof dish. Place half the seafood over it, then season and top with a third of the courgettes.
3 Top with 2 sheets of pasta, then more passata, seafood, courgettes, another layer of pasta, more passata and finish with the rest of the courgettes. Mix the parmesan and breadcrumbs, then scatter on top. Bake for 25-30 mins until golden. Steam or boil the green beans and serve with the lasagne.

GOOD TO KNOW healthy • low fat • folate • vit c • 2 of 5-a-day
PER SERVING 249 kcals • fat 6g • saturates 2g • carbs 27g • sugars 6g • fibre 2g • protein 24g • salt 1.41g

Chickpea, tomato & spinach curry

SERVES 6 **PREP** 15 mins
COOK 25 mins **EASY** **V**

- 1 onion, chopped
- 2 garlic cloves, chopped
- 3cm piece ginger, grated
- 6 ripe tomatoes, chopped
- ½ tbsp oil
- 1 tsp ground cumin
- 2 tsp ground coriander
- 1 tsp turmeric
- pinch chilli flakes
- 1 tsp yeast extract (we used Marmite)
- 4 tbsp red lentils
- 6 tbsp coconut cream
- 1 head of broccoli, broken into small florets
- 400g can chickpeas, drained
- 100g baby spinach
- 1 lemon, juiced
- 1 tbsp toasted sesame seeds mixed with 1 tbsp chopped cashews
- brown rice, to serve (optional)

1 Put the onion, garlic, ginger and tomatoes in a food processor or blender and whizz to a purée.

2 Heat the oil in a large pan. Fry the spices for 1 min, then add the yeast extract and puréed onion mixture. Bubble for 2 mins, then add the lentils and coconut cream. Cook until the lentils are tender, then add the broccoli and cook for 4 mins.

3 Stir in the chickpeas and spinach and warm through. Sprinkle over the lemon juice and swirl through the sesame and cashew mixture. Serve with brown rice, if you like.

GOOD TO KNOW vegan • healthy • vit c • 2 of 5-a-day
PER SERVING 199 kcals • fat 10g • saturates 5g • carbs 18g • sugars 6g • fibre 5g • protein 8g • salt 0.42g

Photographs: ALVARAZ / E+ / GETTY

Guide to the Mediterranean

What is a Mediterranean diet and what makes it so good for you? Our experts explain what this way of eating involves and why it's thought to be so healthy.

> “One of the key aspects of the diet is the inclusion of healthy fats, such as olive oil”

What is the Med diet?

The Med diet focuses on food staples from Mediterranean countries such as Spain, Greece, Italy and France. It's primarily plant-based, with the main contributions from animal-based products being fish, poultry and a little dairy. There's plenty of seasonal fruit and veg, as well as beans, legumes and wholegrains. Alcohol intake is low to moderate, and typically red wine.

One of the key aspects is the inclusion of healthy fats. Olive oil, predominantly a monounsaturated fat, is most commonly associated with the diet, but polyunsaturated fats are also present in the form of nuts, seeds and oily fish.

How does the Med diet work?

Rather than individual ‘superfoods’, it seems to be the combination of foods and the overall diet approach that make this such a healthy way to eat. Another important aspect is the sense of community, with meals taking centre stage around conversation with family and friends.

How to follow the Med diet

The Med diet is more a set of guiding principles than a strict regime. It favours whole foods including fruit, veg, lean protein and wholegrains over processed or fast food, and meals are social events,

diet

> People who follow a Mediterranean diet may live longer and be less likely to put on weight

shared with friends and family. Foods commonly include:

- Olive oil, especially extra virgin oil
- Unsalted nuts and seeds
- Oily fish and seafood
- Poultry
- Chickpeas, lentils, peas and beans
- Wholegrain wheat, rice and pasta
- Fruit such as avocado and tomatoes
- Greek yogurt
- Eggs
- Green leafy veg and courgettes
- Starchy vegetables

What foods to eat less of on a Mediterranean diet

- Butter, margarine and lard
- Biscuits, cakes and pastries
- Confectionery
- White refined bread, pasta and rice
- Red and processed meats
- High-fat cheese, cream and milk

What's the evidence for the Med diet?

Research has shown the diet may reduce the risk of type 2 diabetes, high cholesterol and high blood pressure. It's also been found that people who follow a Mediterranean diet may live longer and be less likely to put on weight. While further research is needed, early studies suggest that the Med diet could also be associated with a lower risk of dementia.

Does the Med diet work for weight loss?

The evidence for weight loss and management over time is impressive. Four meta-analyses of randomised controlled trials have shown a greater reduction of body weight and BMI than with other diets, while a meta-analysis of seven prospective cohort studies found a reduced risk of obesity and gaining weight.

Is the Med diet healthy? Our nutritionist's view...

Evidence supports the Med diet as a healthy eating pattern to reduce the risk of obesity and maintain a healthy weight. It offers a balanced, non-restrictive eating plan that also happens to be the typical diet in two of the five so-called 'Blue Zones' – locations renowned for healthy ageing and lower rates of disease.

Taking inspiration from Mediterranean cuisine, these dishes are packed with delicious and healthy ingredients

Healthy seafood pasta

Be transported to a beachside restaurant with a bowl of quick and easy seafood pasta that's bursting with nutrients

SERVES 2 **PREP** 10 mins
COOK 20 mins **EASY**

- 2 tbsp olive or rapeseed oil
- 1 small fennel bulb, halved and thinly sliced
- 1 onion, finely chopped
- 150g wholemeal spaghetti
- 2 large pinches of chilli flakes
- 3 garlic cloves, finely grated
- ½ lemon, zested, plus 2 tbsp juice
- 3 tbsp tomato purée
- 300g frozen mixed seafood (we used a mixture of prawns, mussels and squid rings), defrosted
- 3 tbsp chopped parsley

1 Heat the oil in a large non-stick pan and cook the fennel and onion for 10 mins, stirring occasionally, until softened. Meanwhile, bring a pan of water to the boil and cook the spaghetti for 10 mins, until al dente.
2 When the fennel and onion mixture has softened, stir in the chilli flakes, garlic and lemon zest and juice. Add the tomato purée and cook briefly, stirring all the time.
3 Drain the pasta, reserving a mugful of the cooking water. Stir the seafood into the tomato sauce and warm through. Toss the spaghetti into the sauce with the parsley and just enough of the reserved cooking water to loosen. Season and serve.

GOOD TO KNOW healthy • fibre • vit c • iron • 3 of 5-a-day
PER SERVING 531 kcals • fat 16g • saturates 2g • carbs 57g • sugars 8g • fibre 11g • protein 35g • salt 0.8g

Veggie platter with butter bean dip

SERVES 2 **PREP** 15 mins
COOK 30 mins **EASY** **V**

1 lemon
1 large red pepper, quartered
1 large courgette, sliced into rounds
1 tbsp olive or rapeseed oil, plus a drizzle
400g butter beans, drained, liquid reserved
1 tbsp tahini
1 garlic clove
2 cooked beetroot (not in vinegar), sliced
1 tbsp chopped dill
½ small red onion, finely chopped
100g natural yogurt
pinch of smoked paprika
6 pitted Kalamata olives, halved
handful of mint leaves, chopped if large
extra virgin olive oil for drizzling (optional)

1 Heat the oven to 220C/200C fan/gas 7. Peel a strip of zest from the lemon and finely chop it. Rub the pepper and courgette with a drizzle of olive oil, then arrange in a single layer on a baking tray (the pepper should be skin-side down). Scatter the chopped lemon zest over the pepper, then roast for 30 mins, turning the courgettes halfway through.

2 Meanwhile, tip the butter beans into a bowl with 2 tbsp of the liquid from the can. Squeeze over the juice of the lemon, then add the tahini, 1 tbsp oil and the garlic. Blitz with a hand blender until smooth, adding more liquid from the can if it's too thick. Season to taste.

3 Spoon the mixture onto plates and top with the beetroot, dill and onion, then the courgettes. Drizzle over the yogurt, then sprinkle with paprika. Scatter over the peppers, olives and mint, then drizzle with extra virgin olive oil, if you like.

GOOD TO KNOW healthy • calcium • iron • folate • fibre • vit c • fibre • gluten free • 4 of 5-a-day
PER SERVING 375 kcals • fat 16g • saturates 3g • carbs 34g • sugars 19g • fibre 15g • protein 17g • salt 0.6g

Vegan olive wraps with mustard vinaigrette

Eat the rainbow when it comes to veg – the more colourful, the more diverse the nutrients you add to your diet. This wrap makes a great lunch to take to work.

SERVES 1 **PREP** 10 mins **NO COOK**

1 carrot, shredded or coarsely grated
80g red cabbage, finely shredded
2 spring onions, thinly sliced
1 courgette, shredded or coarsely grated
handful basil leaves
5 green olives, pitted and halved
½ tsp English mustard powder
2 tsp extra virgin rapeseed oil
1 tbsp cider vinegar
1 large seeded tortilla

1 Mix all the ingredients except for the tortilla and toss well. Put the tortilla on a sheet of foil and pile the filling along one side. It will almost look like too much, but once you start to roll it firmly it will squash down.

2 Roll the tortilla up, folding in the sides as you go. Fold the foil in at the ends to seal. Cut in half if eating straight away or, if taking to work, leave whole and wrap up in baking parchment.

GOOD TO KNOW healthy • vegan • low fat • low cal • calcium • folate • fibre • vit c • 3 of 5-a-day
PER SERVING 281 kcals • fat 12g • saturates 2g • carbs 31g • sugars 12g • fibre 10g • protein 8g • salt 0.9g

Herby lamb fillet with caponata

This twist on a Sunday roast contains all five of your 5-a-day. For a vegetarian version, leave out the lamb of course, and add chickpeas to the caponata.

SERVES 2 **PREP** 10 mins
COOK 35 mins **EASY**

4 baby new potatoes, halved
1 garlic clove, grated
1 tsp chopped rosemary
1 tsp rapeseed oil
250g lean lamb loin fillet, fat removed
240g baby spinach
finely chopped parsley (optional)

For the caponata

2 tsp rapeseed oil
1 red onion, cut into wedges
1 aubergine, sliced and quartered
500g passata
1 green pepper, sliced
6 pitted Kalamata olives, halved and rinsed
2 tsp capers, rinsed
1 tsp chopped rosemary
1 tsp balsamic vinegar
2 garlic cloves, sliced

1 Heat the oil for the caponata in a wide, lidded pan. Fry the onion over a medium heat for 5 mins to soften. Tip in the aubergine and cook, stirring, for 5 mins more. Add the passata, pepper, olives, capers, rosemary and balsamic vinegar, then cover and cook for 15 mins, stirring frequently.

2 Meanwhile, heat the oven to 190C/170C fan/gas 5. Boil the potatoes for 10 mins, then drain. Mix the grated garlic with the rosemary and some black pepper, then rub all over the lamb. Toss the potatoes in the oil with some more black pepper, place in a small roasting tin with the lamb and roast for 15-20 mins. While the lamb is cooking, wilt the spinach in the microwave or in a pan. Once cool enough to handle, squeeze out any excess liquid.

3 Stir the sliced garlic into the caponata. Roll the lamb in parsley, if you like, then slice and serve with the caponata, potatoes and spinach.

GOOD TO KNOW healthy • low fat • low cal • calcium • folate • fibre • vit c • iron • 5 of 5-a-day • gluten free
PER SERVING 483 kcals • fat 17g • saturates 5g • carbs 40g • sugars 24g • fibre 17g • protein 34g • salt 1.4g

Avocado panzanella

SERVES 4 **PREP** 20 mins **NO COOK** **EASY** **V**

800g mix of ripe tomatoes
1 garlic clove, crushed
1½ tbsp capers, drained and rinsed
1 ripe avocado, chopped
1 small red onion, thinly sliced
175g ciabatta or crusty bread
4 tbsp extra virgin olive oil
2 tbsp red wine vinegar
small handful basil leaves

1 Halve or roughly chop the tomatoes and put them in a bowl. Season, then add the garlic, capers, avocado and onion. Mix well, then set aside for 10 mins.
2 Meanwhile, tear or slice the ciabatta into 3cm chunks and place in a large serving bowl or on a platter. Drizzle with half the olive oil and half the vinegar and season. When ready to serve, pour over the tomatoes and any juices. Scatter with the basil leaves and drizzle over the remaining oil and vinegar. Stir a final time, then serve immediately.

GOOD TO KNOW vegan • healthy • low cal
PER SERVING 332 kcals • fat 21g • saturates 4g • carbs 30g • sugars 8g • fibre 6g • protein 7g • salt 0.9g

Roasted pepper pesto pasta

SERVES 4 **PREP** 10 mins **COOK** 15 mins **EASY** **V**

2 garlic cloves
4 jarred roasted red peppers, drained
1 tsp cayenne pepper
75g blanched almonds, roughly chopped
50g vegetarian Italian-style hard cheese, roughly chopped, plus extra to serve (optional)
2 tbsp olive oil
400g pasta (we used tripolini)
large pack basil leaves

1 Blitz the garlic, roasted peppers, cayenne, almonds, cheese and oil in a small food processor until the consistency of pesto. Season to taste.
2 Cook the pasta following pack instructions. Drain, reserving a little of the cooking water. Return the pasta to the pan along with the pesto, basil and a little of the cooking water. Heat through, then serve with extra cheese, if you like.

GOOD TO KNOW healthy • fibre • vit c • fibre • 1 of 5-a-day
PER SERVING 636 kcals • fat 23g • saturates 5g • carbs 84g • sugars 13g • fibre 8g • protein 22g • salt 0.3g

Mediterranean potato salad

SERVES 4-6 **PREP** 10 mins
COOK 15 mins **EASY** **V**

1kg baby new potatoes, halved
1 tbsp olive oil
3 tbsp grated vegetarian Italian-style hard cheese
small bunch basil, roughly chopped
6 sundried tomatoes, finely sliced

1 Cook the potatoes in boiling water for about 15 mins, until tender. Drain and allow to cool slightly.

2 Whisk together the olive oil and cheese. Season, then toss with the potatoes, basil and sundried tomatoes. Serve warm.

GOOD TO KNOW low fat
PER SERVING (6) 178 kcals • fat 5g • saturates 2g • carbs 29g • sugars 2g • fibre 3g • protein 6g • salt 0.2g

Photographs: CLAUDI TOTIR / MOMENT / GETTY, ISTOCK / GETTY IMAGES PLUS

Introduction to the low-GI diet

Eating foods that have a low score on the glycaemic index can keep blood sugar levels steady and even help your body metabolise fat more efficiently. Find out how the diet works...

What is the glycaemic index?

The glycaemic index (GI) is a measure of how quickly the energy in food (predominantly in carbohydrates) is broken down by the body into glucose. Carbs are found in bread, cereals, rice, pasta, fruit, veg and dairy, and are an important part of a healthy, balanced diet. The low-GI diet, originally designed for people with diabetes, helps manage blood sugar but can also help people make healthier food choices.

> “Low-GI foods release their energy more slowly and help prevent sugar highs”

How do low-GI diets work?

The GI ranks foods on a scale of 0-100. Glucose is the reference point and carries a score of 100: it's the food that is broken down the fastest by our digestion, and raises the glucose levels in the blood most quickly.

When blood glucose levels rise, the pancreas releases a hormone called insulin, which promotes the uptake of glucose by the cells and brings blood sugar levels back to a more manageable range.

Foods with low GI ratings release their energy more slowly and help prevent sugar highs. If you typically eat a lot of high-GI foods, such as white bread, processed breakfast cereals, cakes and biscuits, you'll have a lot of readily available energy in your blood, which your body will have to work hard to manage. If you're unable to use it as energy, the body will store it for later use.

Low-GI foods

Foods with a GI of 55 or lower are classed as low-GI. These include:

- Non-starchy vegetables – asparagus, broccoli, cabbage, celeriac, lettuce, mushrooms, raw carrots, turnips
- Fruit – apples, avocado, berries, grapefruit, plums, peaches, tomatoes
- Beans & pulses – butter beans, kidney beans, chickpeas, lentils, peanuts
- Grains – barley, rye, wild rice and pseudo-cereals including quinoa, plus

> Following a low-GI diet can help you manage your appetite and may help you manage your weight

wholegrain breakfast cereals
- Nuts – almonds, hazelnuts, pecans, walnuts and their oils

High-GI foods

Foods with a GI of 70 or more are classed as high-GI. These include:

- Starchy vegetables – potatoes, frozen or canned corn, parsnips
- Fruit – dried dates, pineapple, overly ripe bananas
- Grains – rice, instant cereal, tapioca, breakfast cereals such as cornflakes and rice snaps
- Processed foods made from white flour and white sugar, including breads

Is a low-GI diet good for you?

Following a low-GI diet can help you manage your appetite and may help you manage your weight. It may also be helpful if you're worried about your risk of type 2 diabetes and heart disease. This is because a low-GI diet improves blood sugar and insulin control and helps manage cholesterol levels. The effect of stabilising blood sugar levels should also mean you feel improvements in energy, mood and concentration levels.

What's the evidence for a low-GI diet?

Studies of low-GI diets have shown varied results, however in general they suggest a low-GI diet may be helpful for:

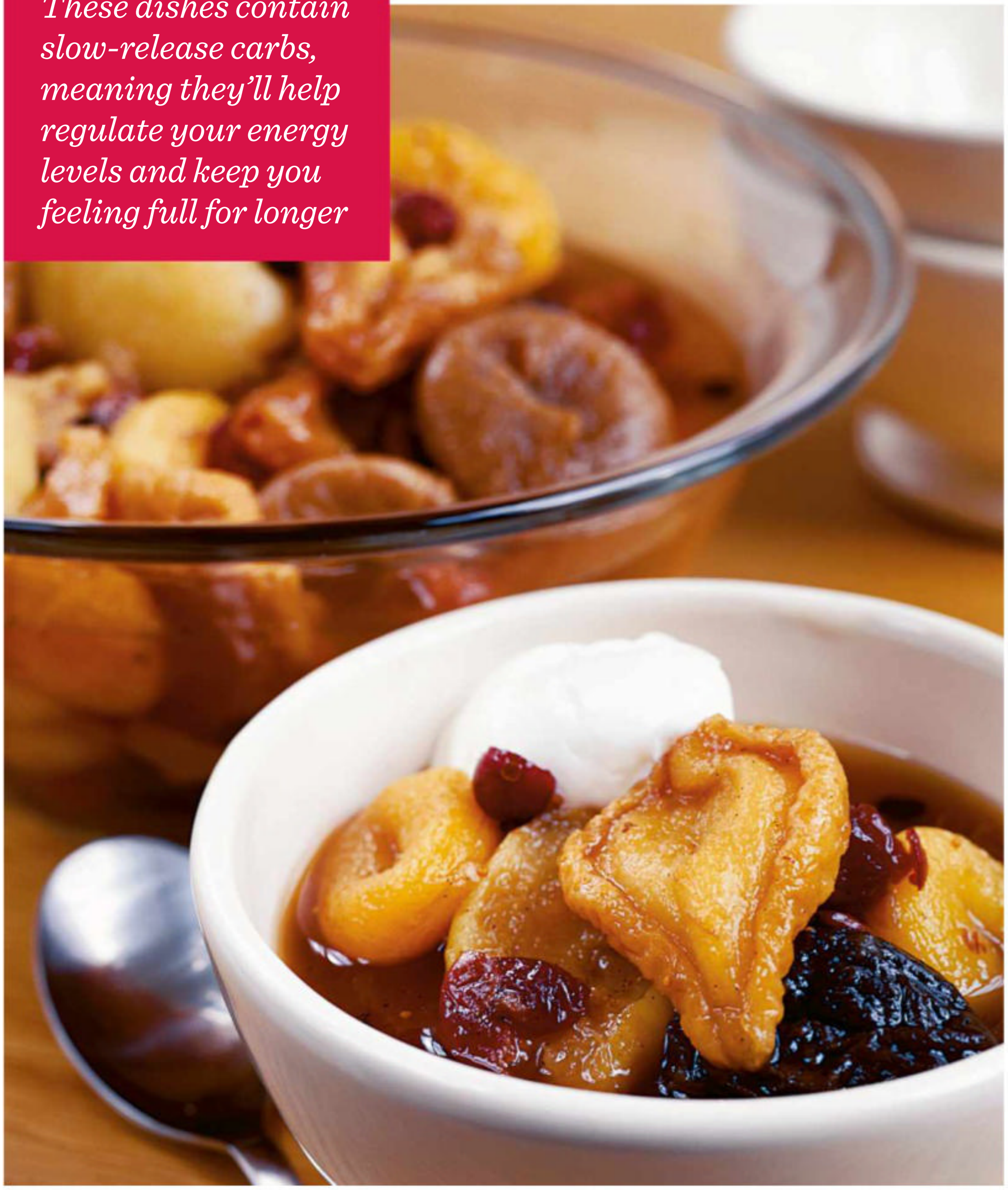
- Managing weight
- Lowering blood pressure
- Lowering total cholesterol levels
- Helping to manage blood sugar, especially for people with diabetes
- Lowering the risk of diabetes and cardiovascular disease

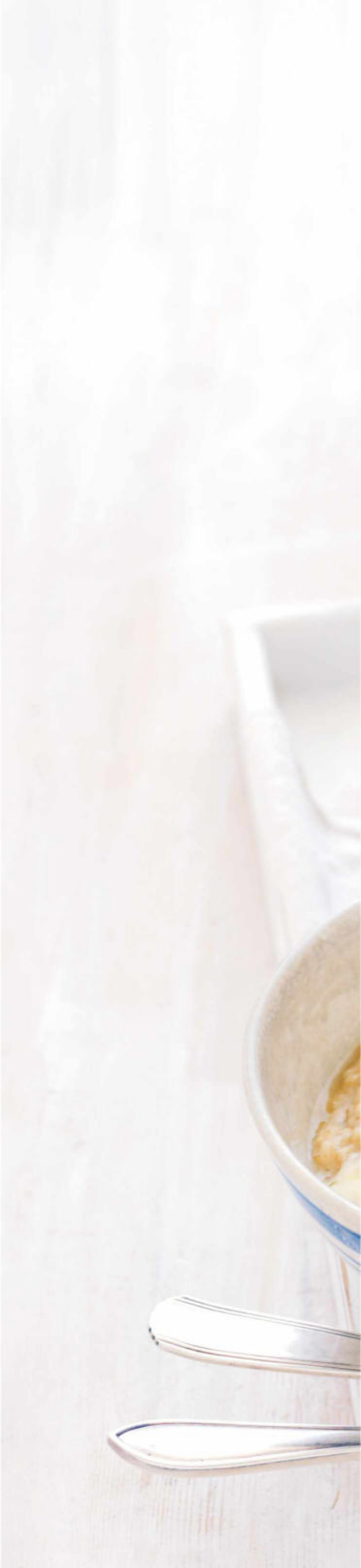
Is the low-GI diet healthy? A nutritionist's view...

The low-GI diet has a number of benefits, including its ability to help manage blood sugar levels, aid weight management and lower the risk of health conditions like heart disease and type 2 diabetes. From a practical perspective, there's no counting calories or tracking macronutrients.

That said, the GI of a food doesn't reflect all of its health qualities; for example, a low-GI food can still be high in fat or salt. Ultimately, a healthy, balanced diet should include a variety of whole, unprocessed foods, regardless of their GI score.

These dishes contain slow-release carbs, meaning they'll help regulate your energy levels and keep you feeling full for longer





Winter fruit salad

SERVES 6 **PREP** 20 mins **COOK** 10 mins
EASY **V**

600g good-quality ready-to-eat dried fruit (such as prunes, pears, apricots, figs or cranberries)
3 tbsp honey
1 vanilla pod, split lengthways
1 Earl Grey teabag
1 tbsp fresh lemon juice
mascarpone or Greek yogurt, to serve

1 Tip the fruit and 700ml cold water into a large saucepan. Add the honey and vanilla, scraping the seeds from the pod into the pan (add the pod as well for extra flavour). Bring to the boil. Stir well, lower the heat and simmer for 10 mins, until slightly syrupy.
2 Take the pan off the heat and add the teabag. Leave to infuse for 10 mins.
3 Discard the teabag and vanilla pod, then tip the fruit and liquid into a non-metallic bowl and pour over the lemon juice. Stir, then serve warm or cold, with mascarpone or yogurt.

GOOD TO KNOW healthy
PER SERVING 192 kcals • fat 1g • saturates none • carbs 46g • sugars 6g • fibre 6g • protein 3g • salt 0.1g

Apple & linseed porridge

SERVES 4 **PREP** 5 mins **COOK** 5 mins
EASY **V**

100g porridge oats
2 eating apples, peeled and grated
½ tsp ground cinnamon, plus extra for sprinkling
500ml skimmed milk
2 tbsp ground linseeds
150ml pot probiotic yogurt
honey or agave syrup, for drizzling

1 In a medium saucepan, mix the oats, apples, cinnamon and milk. Bring to the boil, stirring occasionally, then turn down the heat and cook for 4-5 mins, stirring constantly.
2 Stir in the ground linseeds, then divide into 4 breakfast bowls. Top each with a dollop of yogurt, a drizzle of honey or agave syrup, and a sprinkle of extra cinnamon.

GOOD TO KNOW healthy
PER SERVING 236 kcals • fat 6g • saturates 2g • carbs 29g • sugars 15g • fibre 6g • protein 12g • salt 0.2g

Spinach, sweet potato & lentil dhal

SERVES 4 **PREP** 10 mins
COOK 35 mins **EASY** **V**

1 tbsp sesame oil
1 red onion, finely chopped
1 garlic clove, crushed
thumb-sized piece ginger, peeled and finely chopped
1 red chilli, finely chopped
1½ tsp ground turmeric
1½ tsp ground cumin
2 sweet potatoes, chopped
250g red split lentils
600ml vegetable stock
80g spinach
4 spring onions, sliced diagonally, to serve
½ small pack of Thai basil, leaves torn, to serve

1 Heat the oil in a wide-based pan with a tight-fitting lid. Add the onion and cook over a low heat for 10 mins, stirring occasionally, until softened. Add the garlic, ginger and chilli, cook for 1 min, then add the spices and cook for 1 min more.
2 Turn up the heat to medium, add the sweet potato and stir so the potato is coated in the spice mixture. Add the lentils and stock and season. Bring to the boil, then reduce the heat, cover and cook for 20 mins, until the lentils are tender and the potato is just holding its shape.
3 Season to taste, then stir in the spinach. Once wilted, top with the spring onions and basil to serve. Alternatively, allow to cool completely, then divide between airtight containers and store in the fridge for a healthy lunchbox.

GOOD TO KNOW vegan • healthy • low fat • low cal • fibre • iron • 3 of 5-a-day
PER SERVING 397 kcals • fat 5g • saturates 1g • carbs 65g • sugars 19g • fibre 11g • protein 18g • salt 0.6g

Barley, chicken & mushroom risotto

SERVES 4 **PREP** 10 mins **COOK** 50 mins
EASY

- 1 tbsp each butter and olive oil
- 2 large shallots, finely sliced
- 1 garlic clove, chopped
- 3 skinless chicken breasts, cut into chunky pieces
- 300g pearl barley
- 250ml white wine
- 400g mixed wild and chestnut mushrooms, chopped
- 1 tbsp thyme leaves
- 1 litre hot chicken stock
- 3 tbsp grated parmesan, plus shavings to serve (optional)
- chopped chives, to serve

1 Heat the butter and oil in a large saucepan. Cook the shallots and garlic with some seasoning for 5 mins, then stir in the chicken and cook for 2 mins.

2 Add the pearl barley and cook for 1 min. Pour in the wine and stir until absorbed. Add the mushrooms and thyme, then pour over three-quarters of the stock. Simmer for 40 mins, until the barley is tender, stirring occasionally and topping up with stock if it looks dry. Take off the heat and stir in the parmesan. Serve with chives and parmesan shavings scattered over, if you like.

GOOD TO KNOW healthy • low fat • 1 of 5-a-day
PER SERVING 564 kcals • fat 12g • saturates 5g • carbs 61g • sugars 3g • fibre 3g • protein 42g • salt 1.1g

Spicy meatballs with chilli black beans

SERVES 4 **PREP** 20 mins **COOK** 25 mins
MORE EFFORT

1 red onion, halved and sliced
2 garlic cloves, sliced
1 yellow pepper, diced
1 tsp ground cumin
2-3 tsp chipotle chilli paste
300ml reduced-salt chicken stock
400g can cherry tomatoes
400g can black beans or red kidney beans, drained
1 avocado, chopped
½ lime, juiced

For the meatballs

500g pack turkey breast mince
50g porridge oats
2 spring onions, finely chopped
1 tsp each ground cumin and coriander
small bunch coriander, chopped, stalks and leaves kept separate
1 tsp rapeseed oil

1 First, make the meatballs. Put the turkey mince, oats, spring onions, spices and coriander stalks into a bowl, then lightly knead together until well mixed. Shape into 12 balls. Heat the oil in a non-stick frying pan and cook the meatballs, turning frequently, until golden. Remove from the pan.

2 Add the onion, garlic and pepper to the pan and stir-fry until softened. Stir in the cumin and chilli paste, then pour in the stock. Return the meatballs to the pan and cook, covered, over a low heat for 10 mins.

3 Stir in the tomatoes and beans and cook, uncovered, for a few mins more. Toss the avocado in the lime juice. Serve the meatballs topped with the avocado and coriander leaves.

GOOD TO KNOW healthy • low fat • low cal • fibre • vit c • 3 of 5-a-day

PER SERVING 376 kcals • fat 11g • saturates 2g • carbs 23g • sugars 8g • fibre 10g • protein 42g • salt 0.8g

Photography: ISTOCK / GETTY IMAGES PLUS, ARCONT / MOMENT / GETTY

Prawn & tomato stew with gremolata topping

SERVES 4 **PREP** 10 mins **COOK** 35 mins **EASY**

500g new potatoes
2 tbsp olive oil
1 large onion, sliced
4 celery sticks, sliced
2 garlic cloves, chopped
2 anchovy fillets, chopped
pinch of chilli flakes
400g can chopped tomatoes
250ml white wine
200ml vegetable stock
400g raw king prawns, peeled
1 lemon, zested and juiced
1 tsp salted baby capers, rinsed
large handful parsley, chopped
toasted bread, to serve

1 Put the potatoes in a pan of cold salted water and bring to the boil. Reduce the heat to medium and simmer for 15-20 mins or until cooked but still firm. Drain and, when cool enough to handle, thickly slice.

2 Meanwhile, heat the oil in a large saucepan over a low-medium heat. Add the onion, celery, garlic, anchovies and chilli, season, and cook for 8 mins, or until softened. Increase the heat to medium-high, add the tomatoes, wine and stock, and cook for 15 mins. Add the prawns, lemon juice, capers and potatoes and cook for 5 mins more, or until the prawns turn pink and are just cooked. Mix together the parsley and lemon zest, then scatter over the stew. Serve with toasted bread, for dunking.

GOOD TO KNOW healthy • low fat • low cal • vit c • 1 of 5-a-day
PER SERVING 308 kcals • fat 7g • saturates 1g • carbs 29g • sugars 10g • fibre 5g • protein 22g • salt 1g

Wholewheat pasta with broccoli & almonds

SERVES 2 **PREP** 5 mins **COOK** 15 mins **EASY** **V**

2 tbsp extra virgin olive oil
1 red chilli, deseeded and sliced (add extra chilli if you like it hot)
3 garlic cloves, thinly sliced
250g wholewheat spaghetti
300g long-stem broccoli, cut into pieces
1 lemon, zested
25g toasted flaked almonds
parmesan shavings (or vegetarian alternative), to serve

1 Heat the olive oil in a large frying pan. Add the chilli and garlic and cook over a low heat until golden. Remove from the heat.

2 Cook the pasta following pack instructions, adding the broccoli for the last 4 mins of cooking time. Once cooked, drain, then add to the pan with the chilli and garlic. Add the lemon zest and almonds and toss together. Serve topped with parmesan shavings.

GOOD TO KNOW healthy • folate • fibre • vit c • 1 of 5-a-day
PER SERVING 638 kcals • fat 23g • saturates 3g • carbs 82g • sugars 6g • fibre 16g • protein 26g • salt none

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BONUS RECIPE

Healthy beef chow mein

SERVES 2 **PREP** 10 mins **COOK** 10 mins **EASY**

- 2 wholemeal noodle nests (85g)
- 2 tsp rapeseed or sesame oil
- 200g lean fillet steak, fat removed and cut into thin strips
- 1 small red onion (100g), finely chopped
- 15g piece of ginger, finely chopped
- 160g chestnut mushrooms, thickly sliced
- 2 garlic cloves, finely chopped
- 160g ready-to-eat beansprouts
- 1½ tsp tamari
- 1 tbsp brown rice vinegar
- 4 spring onions (65g), chopped diagonally

1 Cook the noodles following pack instructions. Meanwhile, heat half the oil in a wok and stir-fry the beef over a high heat for 30 seconds until browned. Tip onto a plate, set aside, then add the remaining oil to the wok. Stir-fry the onion and ginger until softened. Add a drop of water to prevent burning, if needed, and then cook, covered, for a further 2-3 mins.

2 Stir in the mushrooms and garlic, and fry for about 3 mins until they start to soften, then add the beansprouts and cook for a minute or two more until piping hot.

3 Mix the tamari and vinegar together in a small bowl with 2 tbsp water. Tip the drained noodles into the wok, toss well, then add the tamari mixture, spring onions and the beef. Stir-fry for a few minutes until heated through. Season with plenty of black pepper.

GOOD TO KNOW healthy • low fat • low cal • folate • fibre • vit c • 2 of 5-a-day
PER SERVING 407 kcals • fat 11g • saturates 3g • carbs 41g • sugars 10g • fibre 8g • protein 32g • salt 1g

Should you try a detox diet?

Ever considered a ‘detox diet’ as a quick way to feel better and lose a few pounds? Find out why this could be potentially harmful to your health

> There is no evidence to support the value of a detox for weight loss

What is a detox diet?

Those who ‘detox’ typically do so because they believe their body needs a break from the overload of toxins in our everyday lives – from processed and junk food to alcohol, caffeine, sugar, cigarette smoke and pollution. Advocates believe a detox helps the body manage these toxins, and can help minimise or reduce weight gain, cellulite, bloating, fatigue and ill health.

How does a detox diet work?

Lasting anything from 24 hours to a few weeks, detox diets vary but often involve:

- Fasting for short periods
- Eating only fruit and vegetables, or their juices
- Cutting out major food groups, such as wheat/gluten and dairy
- Avoiding caffeine, sugar or alcohol
- Supplementing with a ‘detox’ solution, pill or tea

What can I eat on a detox diet?

Most detox diets omit or limit caffeine, salt, sugar and alcohol, as well as refined and processed foods. Other food groups may also be excluded depending on the diet.

Fruit fasts, for example, cut out several entire food groups; others might eliminate key foods such as wheat or dairy.

What is the evidence for a detox diet?

There is no scientific evidence to support the value of a detox for weight loss. Our bodies are designed to repair, regenerate and detoxify themselves. We have specific organs like the liver, kidneys, skin, digestive system and lungs, as well as enzymes in our cells, that break down and eliminate toxins and internal waste products.

> “Detox diets can be extreme and, when followed for a sustained period of time, may lead to dangerous nutritional deficiencies”

Will I lose weight?

Although a 2017 review suggested that juicing and detox diets may lead to initial weight loss because of the severe calorie restriction, much of this weight loss will be water, stored glycogen and waste products. The majority of it will be regained once normal eating patterns are resumed.

Is a detox diet healthy? A nutritionist's view...

While there are very few benefits to detox diets, it may be argued that they help you think about what and when you eat, encouraging intake of more fruit veg and water, and less processed foods, caffeine and alcohol. Eating only whole, unprocessed foods may help retrain your palate so you're less likely to want foods that are high in fat, salt and sugar.

That said, cutting back on key nutrients like protein is far more likely to compromise your body's ability to detoxify than support it. Some detox diets claim to help you break unhelpful habits, but this may be an oversimplification: habitual, emotional or comfort eating can be the result of complex behaviours which are unlikely to be resolved by a short-term eating plan.

Detox diets can be extreme and, when followed for a sustained period of time, may lead to dangerous nutritional deficiencies and imbalances. Plans that advocate specific supplements can be expensive and have limited evidence to support their use. Detox diets may trigger unhealthy eating patterns and behaviours, especially in teenagers.

With no scientific support, and with the prospect of most dieters putting weight back on when they return to regular eating patterns, detox diets are not what they're touted to be.

Who shouldn't do a detox diet?

While a detox diet may encourage some positive habits, like eating more fruit and veg or drinking more water, there is no need to severely restrict your diet or take supplements or teas unless you have been advised to do so by a medical professional. Your body is well equipped to detoxify and remove waste, so the best strategy for dealing with overindulgences is to get back to enjoying a healthy, varied diet combined with an active lifestyle.

Stick to unprocessed food and avoid additives and unhealthy fats by making these nutritious versions of takeaways and treats

Chicken jalfrezi

SERVES 4 **PREP** 20 mins
COOK 20 mins **EASY**

- 6 green chillies
- 2 tbsp sunflower oil
- 5 tomatoes
- 2 garlic cloves, finely chopped
- 1 tbsp ground cumin
- 1 tbsp garam masala
- 1 tsp ground turmeric
- 1 tbsp caster sugar
- 1 tsp flaked sea salt
- 4 boneless, skinless chicken breasts, chopped into bite-sized chunks
- 2 tbsp low-fat natural yogurt
- 1 onion, cut into 12 wedges
- 1 green pepper, roughly chopped
- 2 tsp cornflour

1 Finely chop 4 of the chillies (deseed some or all of them first, depending how much heat you like). Cut the remaining whole chillies from stalk to tip on one side without opening or removing the seeds.

2 Heat 1 tbsp of the oil in a large, deep non-stick frying pan or wok over a high heat. Chop 3 of the tomatoes and add to the pan along with the garlic, chopped chillies, cumin, garam masala, turmeric, sugar and salt. Stir-fry for 3-4 mins, or until the vegetables soften, being careful not to let the garlic or spices burn.

3 Add the chicken pieces and whole chillies and cook for 5 mins, turning the chicken regularly. Pour over 200ml cold water, stir in the yogurt and reduce the heat slightly so the sauce is simmering. Cook for about 8 mins, stirring occasionally, until the chicken is tender and cooked through and the sauce has reduced by about a third. The yogurt may separate to begin with but will eventually cook down to a smooth sauce.

4 While the chicken is cooking, heat the remaining oil in a clean pan and stir-fry the onion and pepper over a high heat for 3-4 mins or until lightly browned. Quarter or halve the remaining tomatoes, add to the pan and stir-fry for 2-3 mins more, or until the vegetables are just tender. Mix the cornflour with 1 tbsp water to form a smooth paste.

5 When the chicken is cooked, stir in the cornflour mixture and simmer for a few secs, stirring constantly, until the sauce thickens. Remove from the heat, add the hot stir-fried vegetables and toss together lightly to serve. And just in case you were wondering, don't eat the whole chillies!

GOOD TO KNOW healthy • low fat • low cal • fibre
PER SERVING 262 kcals • fat 8g • saturates 1g • carbs 15g • sugars 12g • fibre 3g • protein 33g • salt 2g

Easy Singapore noodles (chow mein)

SERVES 4 **PREP** 15 mins **COOK** 20 mins
EASY V

200g vermicelli rice noodles
1 tbsp mild curry powder
$^1/_4$ tsp turmeric
1 tsp caster sugar
1 tbsp sesame oil
2 tbsp low-salt soy sauce
1 tbsp sunflower or vegetable oil
1 onion, sliced
2 peppers, sliced (we used green and orange)
200g beansprouts
1 red chilli, sliced (optional)

1 Boil the kettle and put the noodles in a large pan or bowl. Pour over enough boiling water to cover, pushing the noodles under to help them soften evenly. Set aside for 5-10 mins, until completely soft. Mix the curry powder, turmeric, sugar, sesame oil, soy sauce and 1 tbsp water in a bowl.

2 Heat the wok until very hot. Add the sunflower oil, onion and peppers. Stir-fry for 3-4 mins until softened and starting to brown in places. Drain the noodles and add to the pan, along with the sauce mixture and beansprouts. Stir-fry for a further 3-4 mins, tossing everything together, until hot. Adjust the seasoning with a little more soy or sugar, then scatter over the chilli, if you like more spice.

GOOD TO KNOW vegan • healthy • low fat • fibre • vit c • 1 of 5-a-day
PER SERVING 288 kcals • fat 7g • saturates 1g • carbs 47g • sugars 6g • fibre 6g • protein 7g • salt 0.9g

Chinese chicken curry

SERVES 4 **PREP** 15 mins
COOK 40 mins **EASY**

- 4 skinless chicken breasts, chopped
- 2 tsp cornflour
- 1 onion, diced
- 2 tbsp rapeseed oil
- 1 garlic clove, crushed
- 2 tsp curry powder
- 1 tsp turmeric
- ½ tsp ground ginger
- pinch sugar
- 400ml chicken stock
- 1 tsp soy sauce
- handful frozen peas
- steamed rice, to serve

1 Toss the chicken in the cornflour and season well, then set aside.

2 In a wok, fry the onion in half the oil for 5-6 mins, then add the garlic and cook for another minute. Stir in the spices and sugar and cook for 1 min more. Add the stock and soy sauce, then simmer for 20 mins. Tip into a blender and blitz until smooth

3 Wipe out the pan and fry the chicken in the remaining oil until browned all over. Tip the sauce back into the pan and bring to a simmer. Stir in the peas and cook for 5 mins. Serve with rice.

GOOD TO KNOW healthy • low fat • low cal
PER SERVING 292 kcals • fat 10g • saturates 1g • carbs 8g • sugars 3g • fibre 2g • protein 41g • salt 0.9g

Healthy fish & chips with tartare sauce

SERVES 2 **PREP** 5 mins
COOK 40 mins **EASY**

- 450g potatoes, peeled and cut into chips
- 1 tbsp olive oil, plus extra for brushing
- 2 white fish fillets, about 140g each
- 1 lemon, zested and juiced
- small handful of parsley, chopped
- 1 tbsp capers, chopped
- 2 tbsp 0% fat Greek yogurt

1 Heat the oven to 200C/fan 180C/gas 6. Toss the chips in the oil, spread out on a baking tray and bake for 40 mins, until golden and crisp. After around 25 mins, put the fish in a shallow dish and brush lightly with oil, then season. Squeeze over half the lemon juice and bake for 12-15 mins. After 10 mins, sprinkle over a little parsley and lemon zest and return to the oven to finish cooking.

2 Meanwhile, make the tartare sauce. Mix the capers, yogurt and remaining parsley and lemon juice together and season. Serve the fish and chips with the tartare sauce on the side.

GOOD TO KNOW healthy • vit c
PER SERVING 373 kcals • fat 9g • saturates 1g • carbs 41g • sugars 0g • fibre 3g • protein 35g • salt 0.96g

Vegan biryani

SERVES 4 **PREP** 15 mins
COOK 45 mins **EASY** **V**

- 240g brown basmati rice
- 1½ tbsp rapeseed oil
- 1 large onion, finely chopped
- 1 cinnamon stick
- 3 large garlic cloves, finely chopped
- 20g ginger, peeled and finely chopped
- 1 red chilli, deseeded and finely chopped (optional)
- 1½ tsp cumin seeds
- 1 large red pepper, roughly chopped
- 1 large aubergine, cut into cubes
- 2 tbsp curry powder
- 400g can chopped tomatoes
- 2 tsp vegan bouillon powder
- 320g small cauliflower florets
- 30g coriander, stems and leaves separated and chopped
- 40g flame raisins
- 50g unsalted cashew nuts, toasted

1 Rinse the rice until the water runs clear, then cook following pack instructions for about 20 mins, or until almost tender.
2 Meanwhile, heat the oil in a large, deep frying pan over a medium heat and stir in the onion, cinnamon, garlic, ginger and chilli, if using, to coat in the oil. Scatter over the cumin seeds, cover and cook for 5 mins.
3 Stir well, add the pepper and aubergine, then cook for 3-5 mins, until starting to soften. Stir in the curry powder, then add the tomatoes, bouillon, cauliflower florets, coriander stems and raisins. Cover and simmer for 10 mins over a medium-low heat.
4 Drain the rice, then tip it into the veg mixture and gently toss to combine. Cover and cook over a low heat for 8 mins, until the rice and cauliflower are tender. Try not to add extra liquid, as you don't want the end result to be wet. Remove from the heat and leave to stand for 5 mins, then gently toss through the cashews and coriander leaves. *Will keep chilled for two days. Leave to cool completely first. Reheat portions in the microwave until piping hot before serving.*

GOOD TO KNOW vegan • healthy • low cal • folate • fibre • vit c • iron • 5 of 5-a-day
PER SERVING 500 kcals • fat 16g • saturates 2g • carbs 70g • sugars 20g • fibre 12g • protein 14g • salt 1.02g

Spinach-stuffed pizza pies

Skip the takeaway and make these pizzas that are rich in fibre and protein instead.

SERVES 4 **PREP** 15 mins plus proving and cooling **COOK** 30 mins **EASY** **V**

- 3 tsp rapeseed oil, plus a drop for the tins
- 450g wholemeal spelt flour
- 7g sachet fast-action dried yeast
- 2 onions, thinly sliced
- 320g chestnut mushrooms, thinly sliced
- 4 garlic cloves, finely grated
- 1 tsp vegetable bouillon powder
- 500g baby spinach
- 200g ricotta
- 2 tbsp thyme leaves
- 2 tbsp tomato purée mixed with 3 tbsp water
- 20g vegetarian Italian-style hard cheese, finely grated
- few basil leaves, to serve

1 Heat the oven to 220C/200C fan/gas 7 and oil two shallow 21cm loose-based sandwich tins. To make the dough, tip the flour into a bowl and stir in the yeast. Add 1 tsp oil and 280ml warm water, then bring together, first with a cutlery knife, then your hands, until you have a soft, pliable dough. Add 20ml more water if needed. Cut into quarters and cover with a tea towel.

2 For the filling, heat the remaining oil in a medium frying pan and fry the onions over a medium heat for 5 mins, until they start to colour and soften. Add the mushrooms and garlic and continue to cook, stirring frequently, until cooked through. Stir in the bouillon and spinach, cook until wilted, then add the ricotta and thyme.

3 Take a piece of dough and roll it out so that it lines one of the sandwich tins with just a little bit of overhang (try not to add any extra flour when rolling if you can). Spoon in half the filling, spread it out with the back of the spoon, then roll another piece of dough so it fits snugly inside the tin. Fold over the overhang so the filling is completely enclosed, then spread half the tomato purée on top and scatter with half the cheese. Repeat with the rest of the dough, filling and topping to make two pies, then put in a warm place for about 20 mins to prove.

4 Bake for 15-20 mins until golden, then leave to cool in the tin for 5 mins before serving with a few basil leaves scattered over.

GOOD TO KNOW healthy • calcium • folate • fibre • vit c • 4 of 5-a-day

PER SERVING 574 kcals • fat 14g • saturates 6g • carbs 77g • sugars 10g • fibre 16g • protein 27g • salt 0.8g

Jerk chicken burger

SERVES 2 **PREP** 10 mins plus marinating
COOK 10 mins **EASY**

- 2 skinless chicken breasts
- few thyme sprigs, leaves picked
- 1 tbsp olive oil
- 2 tsp jerk seasoning
- 1 lime, juiced
- 2 large bread rolls
- ½ small mango, sliced
- 1 tomato, sliced
- 1 Little Gem heart, shredded
- mayonnaise and ketchup, to serve

1 Put the chicken breasts in between two pieces of cling film and bash with a rolling pin to flatten. Mix together the thyme, oil, jerk seasoning and half the lime juice in a bowl. Add the chicken and leave to marinate for 5 mins.

2 Heat a griddle or frying pan until hot. Cook the chicken for 4-5 mins on each side, or until cooked through. While the chicken is cooking, slice open the bread rolls and lightly toast the cut sides.

3 Put the chicken in the rolls and top with the mango, tomato and a handful of lettuce. Squeeze over the rest of the lime and top with mayo and ketchup, if you like.

GOOD TO KNOW healthy • low fat • low cal • vit c • 1 of 5-a-day
PER SERVING 417 kcals • fat 9g • saturates 2g • carbs 45g • sugars 11g • fibre 4g • protein 38g • salt 1.2g

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What is the keto diet?

How do low-carb keto diets work, and what is ketosis? We look at the efficacy of the keto diet for weight loss and its potential side effects.

What is the ketogenic diet?

The ketogenic or 'keto' diet is a popular way of eating that involves a very low amount of carbohydrates. Carbs are replaced by fat for energy, with the goal being to promote the body's fat-burning process. There are several versions of this diet, but the one with the most research is the standard keto diet.

How does the keto diet work?

With its very strict carb component, the aim is to send the body into a state of 'ketosis'. Diets that use this approach include Atkins and Dukan, but keto stands apart because of its high fat content with only moderate amounts of protein.

What is ketosis?

Under normal circumstances our body uses glucose from carbs to fuel our activity, keep us warm and support essential organs. When you deprive the body of its main source of energy, it will find an alternative source. The brain demands glucose, and when insufficient amounts are available it pulls stored glucose from the liver and muscles. After 3-4 days, when these reserves are exhausted, the body turns to stored fat and the liver converts the fat into ketones – this process is called 'ketosis'.
In order to trigger ketosis, carb intake needs to be heavily restricted – no more than 20-50g per day.

How to follow the keto diet

Foods generally allowed include high-fat and processed meats, fish, oils, lard, butter, nuts, high-fat dairy, and low-carb veg such as leafy greens, plus specific fruits such as avocado.

Unsurprisingly, drastically reducing carb levels means cutting out bread, pasta, rice, cereals and most conventional baked goods. Less obvious perhaps is the need to skip legumes, beans, root veg, sweetcorn, most fruit, and starchy veggies, such as potatoes. Fruit juices, fizzy drinks, cordials and even milk-based drinks also need to be avoided.

When following the diet, be sure to include plenty of non-starchy vegetables, such as kale and spinach, which are low in carbs but contribute valuable vitamins and minerals.

> In order to trigger ketosis, the carbs you eat need to be heavily restricted

What's the evidence for the keto diet?

The Standard Ketogenic Diet (usually made up of 70-75% fat, 20% protein and 5-10% carbs), which appears to be the most researched, does appear to help people lose weight and control blood sugar in the short term. In addition to weight loss, the diet may offer metabolic improvements in insulin resistance and blood pressure as well as cholesterol and blood triglyceride levels. As a consequence, there is growing interest in the use of low-carb diets for type 2 diabetes.

That said, although there are several theories as to why keto diets promote weight loss, they have not been consistently demonstrated in the research. There have been few long-term studies on the keto diet, although one 2013 study did suggest that those on a very low-carb diet achieved a greater weight loss over a longer period than those following a low-fat diet.

Does a keto diet work?

Keto diets appear to lead to weight loss, and may improve insulin sensitivity in those with diabetes. When compared to a low-fat diet, a keto diet appears to achieve greater reduction in body weight. Initial weight loss may be rapid, but is typically due to the diuretic effect of the diet (water is lost as stored muscle glucose is used up) and is subsequently followed by fat loss.

Is the keto diet healthy? Our nutritionist's view...

Ketosis is a response designed to help humans adapt to periods of famine, but it may have unfavourable consequences for some people if followed for a prolonged period.

The diet contradicts most people's understanding of a healthy diet, which promotes the balanced consumption of carbs, protein and fat. The carb restrictions mean you'll find it hard to reach your 5-a-day, and eating high-fat foods is likely to increase your saturated fat intake. It's also worth noting that, because the diet restricts carbs, it's typically low in dietary fibre, which may have a negative impact on gut health.

Dehydration symptoms are likely during the early stages of the diet, and can include headache, dry mouth, bad breath, fatigue and nausea.

Keto cooking can be tricky, with its minimal carb allowance, and only moderate protein. We've done the hard work with these dishes which all fit the bill

---

Bacon & avocado frittata

SERVES 4 **PREP** 10 mins
COOK 25 mins **EASY**

- 8 rashers smoked streaky bacon
- 3 tbsp olive oil
- 6 eggs, beaten
- 1 large avocado, sliced
- 1 small red chilli, finely chopped
- 1 heaped tsp Dijon mustard
- 2 tsp red wine vinegar
- 200g bag mixed salad leaves (we used watercress, rocket & spinach)
- 12 baby plum tomatoes, halved

1 Heat a 24cm non-stick ovenproof pan and fry the bacon rashers in batches on a high heat until cooked through and crisp. Roughly chop 4 rashers and break the other 4 into large pieces. Set aside on kitchen paper and clean the pan.
2 Heat the grill to high. Warm 1 tbsp oil in the pan. Season the eggs, then add to the pan with the chopped bacon. Cook on a low heat for around 8 mins, or until almost set. Arrange the avocado slices and bacon pieces on top. Grill for about 4 mins, until set.
3 Mix the rest of the oil with the chilli, mustard and vinegar in a large bowl and season. Add the salad leaves and tomatoes and toss. Cut the frittata into wedges and serve with the salad.

GOOD TO KNOW folate • vit c • 2 of 5-a-day • gluten free
PER SERVING 467 kcals • fat 38g • saturates 9g • carbs 7g • sugars 7g • fibre 5g • protein 22g • salt 2.4g

Spanish chicken traybake

SERVES 4 **PREP** 15 mins
COOK 1 hr **EASY**

- 4 large garlic cloves
- 1 tbsp fresh thyme leaves, plus a few sprigs
- 4 tsp rapeseed or olive oil
- 8 bone-in chicken thighs, excess skin trimmed
- bag mixed peppers (about 700g), roughly sliced
- 140g chorizo, roughly chopped (we used a spicy one)
- 20 pitted black olives
- 200g cherry tomatoes
- 3 tbsp sherry vinegar or red wine vinegar

1 Heat the oven to 200C/180C fan/gas 6. Using a pestle and mortar, crush the garlic and thyme leaves with a little seasoning and 2 tsp oil to make a paste. If you don't have a pestle and mortar, finely grate the garlic, then stir everything together. Rub the paste on the underside of the chicken.

2 Pile the peppers into a large roasting tin along with the chorizo and olives. Toss with the remaining oil, then sit the chicken on top, skin-side up. Scatter over the tomatoes, spoon over the vinegar, season and tuck in the thyme sprigs.

4 Roast for 1 hr until the chicken skin is crispy and the vegetables have softened.

PER SERVING 438 kcals • fat 29g • saturates 8g • carbs 12g • sugars 10g • fibre 6g • protein 28g • salt 0.9g

Greek bouyiourdi

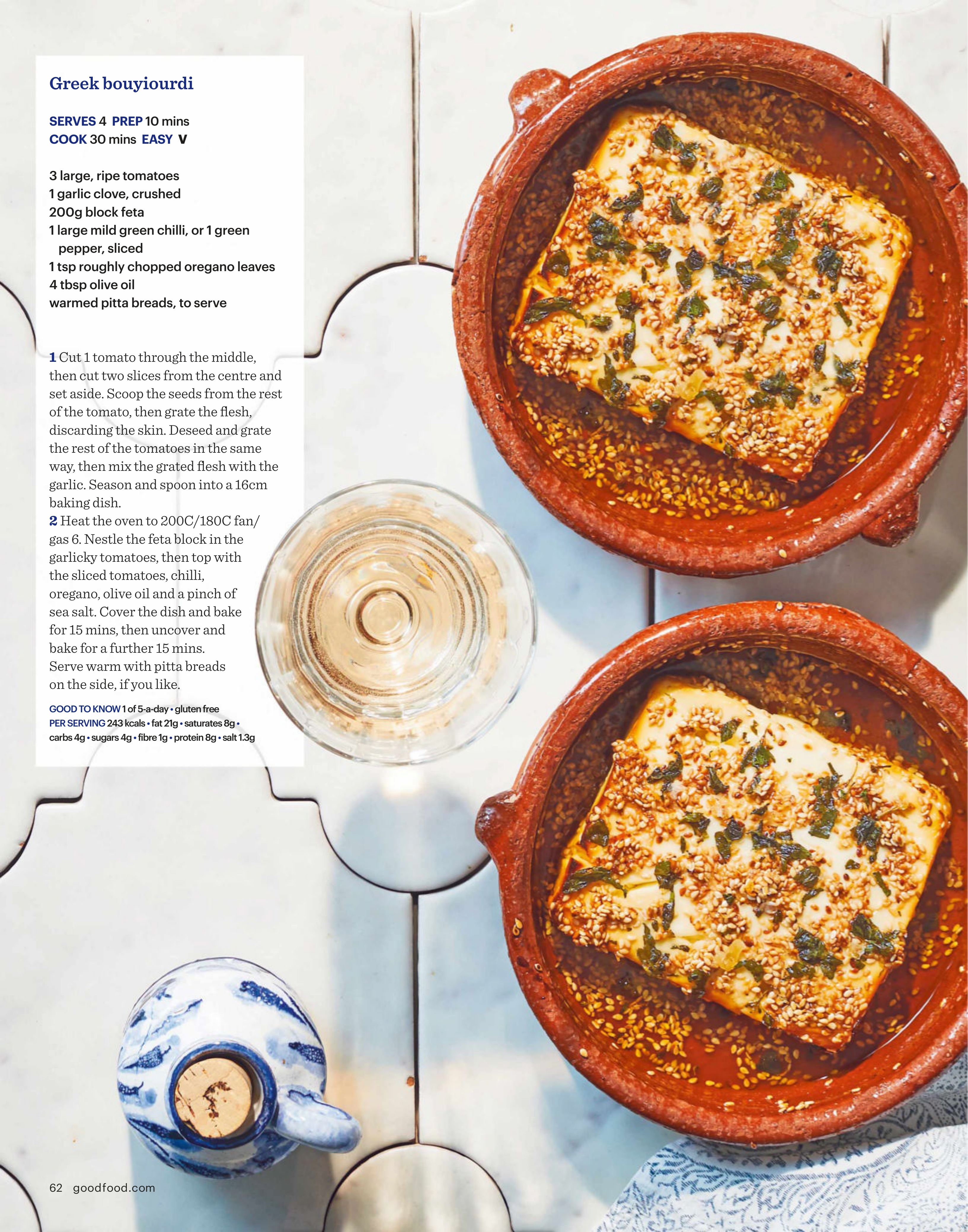
SERVES 4 **PREP** 10 mins
COOK 30 mins **EASY** **V**

- 3 large, ripe tomatoes
- 1 garlic clove, crushed
- 200g block feta
- 1 large mild green chilli, or 1 green pepper, sliced
- 1 tsp roughly chopped oregano leaves
- 4 tbsp olive oil
- warmed pitta breads, to serve

1 Cut 1 tomato through the middle, then cut two slices from the centre and set aside. Scoop the seeds from the rest of the tomato, then grate the flesh, discarding the skin. Deseed and grate the rest of the tomatoes in the same way, then mix the grated flesh with the garlic. Season and spoon into a 16cm baking dish.

2 Heat the oven to 200C/180C fan/gas 6. Nestle the feta block in the garlicky tomatoes, then top with the sliced tomatoes, chilli, oregano, olive oil and a pinch of sea salt. Cover the dish and bake for 15 mins, then uncover and bake for a further 15 mins. Serve warm with pitta breads on the side, if you like.

GOOD TO KNOW 1 of 5-a-day • gluten free
PER SERVING 243 kcals • fat 21g • saturates 8g • carbs 4g • sugars 4g • fibre 1g • protein 8g • salt 1.3g



Keralan chicken coconut ishtu

Green beans and spinach make this creamy chicken curry a flavourful one-pot meal. Serve with cauliflower rice to keep it keto-friendly.

SERVES 4 **PREP** 20 mins
COOK 1 hr 25 mins **MORE EFFORT**

5 tbsp coconut oil or vegetable oil
1 cinnamon stick
6 green cardamom pods
4 cloves
10 black peppercorns, lightly crushed
1 star anise
15 curry leaves
1 medium onion, finely sliced
thumb-sized piece of ginger, peeled and finely chopped
6 garlic cloves, finely chopped
2-3 green chillies
2 tsp fennel seeds
½ tsp ground turmeric
1 tbsp ground coriander
600g chicken thighs, skinned
handful green beans, ends trimmed, halved if very long
400ml can coconut milk
2 tbsp coconut cream
1 tsp vinegar (or to taste)
large handful baby spinach, blanched and water squeezed out
small handful fresh coriander, to garnish

1 Heat the oil in a wide pan (a karahi or wok is ideal), then add the cinnamon stick, cardamom pods, cloves, peppercorns and star anise. Once the seeds have stopped popping, add the curry leaves and the onion and cook over a medium heat until translucent. Add the ginger, garlic and green chillies, and sauté gently for 1-2 mins or until the garlic is cooked.

2 Grind the fennel seeds to a fine powder in a spice grinder or with a pestle and mortar, then add to the pan with the turmeric, ground coriander and a pinch of salt. Add a splash of water and cook for 2 mins. Put the chicken in the pan and cook in the spice paste for 2 mins. Add water to come a third of the way up the chicken, bring to a boil, then reduce the heat and cook, covered, for 1 hr, stirring occasionally.

3 Once the liquid has reduced, add the green beans and coconut milk, cover and cook for another 10 mins. Remove the lid and cook off most of the excess liquid, stirring occasionally. Check the chicken is through. Stir in the coconut cream, vinegar and spinach, and bring to a simmer. Season to taste and serve topped with the coriander.

PER SERVING 538 kcals • fat 39g • saturates 30g • carbs 9g • sugars 4g • fibre 2g • protein 35g • salt 0.4g

Keto smoothie

Use any plant-based milk you have for this easy smoothie. You can also swap the hemp seeds for any nuts or seeds you like.

SERVES 3-4 **PREP** 5 mins
NO COOK EASY V

500ml coconut milk or any plant-based milk of your choice
130g spinach leaves, washed and chopped
130g frozen or fresh berries
40g shelled hemp seeds
20g milled flaxseed
10g piece of ginger
10g tahini
1 tsp cinnamon powder

1 Combine all the ingredients in a powerful blender and blend until smooth. Serve.

GOOD TO KNOW vegan • gluten free
PER SERVING (4) 339 kcals • fat 30g • saturates 19g • carbs 8g • sugars 5g • fibre 4g • protein 8g • salt 0.03g

Keto chocolate cake

SERVES 10 **PREP** 15 mins plus at least 2 hrs chilling **COOK** 30 mins **EASY V**

4 eggs, separated
15g coconut oil or unsalted butter, melted
1 tsp vanilla extract
150g almond flour
100g xylitol or sweetener of your choice
30g cacao powder, sifted
¼ tsp bicarbonate of soda
120ml almond or coconut milk
1 tsp apple cider vinegar
½ tsp baking powder

For the topping
250g Greek-style yogurt
1 tsp cacao powder, sifted, plus extra to serve
1 tsp xylitol

1 For the topping, tip the yogurt onto a piece of cheesecloth or muslin, put in a sieve set over a bowl and chill for at least 2 hrs, or overnight. Whisk the strained yogurt with the cacao and xylitol, and put it back in the fridge.
2 Heat the oven to 180C/160C fan/gas 4. Soak a sheet of baking parchment in water, then crumple, wring it out and use it to line a 22cm springform cake tin. Whisk the egg whites to stiff peaks.
3 Mix the egg yolks, coconut oil and vanilla in a bowl. Add the almond flour, xylitol, cacao, bicarb, milk and vinegar. Fold the egg whites and baking powder into the mixture, and pour into the tin.
4 Bake for 15 mins, then reduce the oven to 160C/140C fan/gas 3 and bake for a further 15 mins. Remove from the oven and leave to cool before releasing from the tin. Put on a platter and spread the topping over using a palette knife. Dust with more cacao to serve.

PER SERVING 227 kcals • fat 15g • saturates 5g • carbs 13g • sugars 2g • fibre 1g • protein 9g • salt 0.3g

Photographs: ISTOCK / GETTY IMAGES PLUS, VICUSCHKA / MOMENT, LISE GAGNE / E+ / GETTY

Keto doughnuts

MAKES 10 **PREP** 15 mins plus cooling
COOK 25 mins **EASY** **V**

- 5g coconut oil, melted, plus a little extra for the tins
- 190g almond flour
- 90g xylitol or sweetener of your choice
- 1/2 tsp baking powder
- 1/4 tsp baking soda
- 60ml almond milk
- 3 eggs
- 1 tsp vanilla extract
- 1 tsp apple cider vinegar
- 100g frozen blueberries (optional)

For the topping

- 1 tbsp nut butter
- 1 tbsp cacao powder

You will need

an 8-hole doughnut tray or silicone mould

1 Heat the oven to 200C/180C fan/gas 6 and oil your doughnut pan or silicone mould. In a large bowl, stir together the almond flour, xylitol, baking powder and baking soda.

2 In a small bowl, whisk together the melted coconut oil, almond milk, eggs and vanilla extract. Fold the wet mixture into the dry mixture. Add the vinegar and mix well to combine.

3 If using the blueberries, add 4 or 5 into each hole of the doughnut pan, then transfer the batter evenly on top, filling each hole three-quarters of the way up.

4 Bake for 12 mins, then reduce the heat to 180C/160C fan/gas 4 and cook for a further 5-10 mins, until the doughnuts are lightly golden. Leave to cool until they're easy to remove from the pan.

5 Meanwhile, stir together the nut butter, cacao powder and 1/2 tsp hot water in a small bowl.

6 When the doughnuts have cooled, remove from the moulds and drizzle with the topping. *Will keep in an airtight container in the fridge for 3 days.*

PER SERVING 183 kcals • fat 13g • saturates 2g • carbs 11g • sugars 1g • fibre none • protein 7g • salt 0.2g

Is a low-fat diet healthy?

Discover the health implications of following a low-fat diet, why fat is essential, and tips for cutting down on 'bad' fats

> "Although eating too much fat can be unhealthy, there are certain types of fat it's essential we get from our diet"

What is fat and why is it important?

Fat, like carbs and protein, is a macronutrient needed by the body to build cell membranes, make nerve tissue and hormones, and aid the absorption of nutrients including vitamins A and D. Our bodies use fat as energy and store any excess for future use; this stored fat acts as an insulator and helps cushion vital organs, bones and other tissues. Although eating too much fat can be unhealthy, there are certain types of fat it's essential we get from our diet.

What are the types of fat?

There are three main types of fat: saturated, monounsaturated and polyunsaturated.

Saturated fat is found in red meat, butter and sausages, as well as ghee and palm oil. It's often associated with cardiovascular disease, obesity and type-2 diabetes, though recent studies suggest some fats found in kefir and yogurt may be beneficial for heart health.

Monounsaturated fat is found in olive oil, nuts and avocados, and is particularly good for heart health.

Polyunsaturated fats include omega-3 (found in oily fish, nuts and seeds) and omega-6. These are termed 'essential fats', as they cannot be produced by the body. They may help reduce blood pressure and prevent blocked arteries.

Which fats should I minimise?

Trans fats, or hydrogenated fats, are usually found in processed foods like pies, pastries and cakes, and in takeaways. They have been linked to high cholesterol and an increased risk of heart disease and cancer.

How much fat should I eat?

UK guidelines recommend our total fat intake shouldn't exceed 35% of our daily calorific needs, with a maximum of 11% for saturated fats. For the average adult female this equates to 70g of total fat and 20g of saturated fat. The UK government also recommends no more than 5g per day from trans fats.

Is a low-fat diet healthy?

A diet that provides insufficient amounts of fat may lead to dry skin, hair loss and a weakened immune system, as well as:

Vitamin deficiencies

Very low intake of fat limits the amount of fat-soluble vitamins A, D, E and K we absorb. These vitamins play an essential role in vision, skin, the immune system, hormone synthesis, bone health and the nervous and reproductive systems.

Poor brain function

Dietary fat is important for brain health and development. Low levels of unsaturated fats may impact cognitive function and mood.

Hormonal imbalance

Women who don't get enough fat in their diet may experience disruptions

> Low levels of unsaturated fats may impact cognitive function and mood

to their menstrual cycle and even fertility issues.

Will I lose weight?

In the short term, limiting your intake of any food or macronutrient may help you lose weight. However, although fat is high in calories (9 kcals per gram compared to 4 kcals from protein or carbs), its association with weight gain isn't clear. Various studies have failed to support low-fat diets over other interventions for long-term, sustained weight management.

Tips for cutting back on fat

If you're looking to improve the balance of fat in your diet, here are some practical steps:

- Choose monounsaturated and polyunsaturated fats instead of saturated to help protect your heart. Enjoy small amounts of butter and coconut oils while focusing on olive or rapeseed oils. Minimise your intake of lard, ghee and palm oils
- Choose lean cuts of meat, trim off excess fat and remove the skin
- Use a spray oil or measure oil with a teaspoon instead of pouring oil straight from the bottle
- Cut down on processed foods such as crisps and biscuits, and avoid fried foods such as samosas, bhajis, chips and doughnuts
- Make your own salad dressings using ingredients such as balsamic vinegar, low-fat yogurt, lemon juice and fresh herbs

We've done the calculations for you with these low-fat recipes

Healthy fish korma

SERVES 4 **PREP** 20 mins
COOK 35 mins **EASY**

- 250g brown basmati rice
- 2 tsp rapeseed oil
- 220g onions, finely chopped
- 25g ginger, peeled and finely chopped
- 1 large courgette, peeled and cubed
- 2 tsp ground turmeric
- 1 tbsp ground coriander
- 1 tsp ground cumin
- 150ml vegetable stock, made with 1 tsp bouillon powder
- 2 tbsp ground almonds
- 100ml coconut or plain bio yogurt
- 2 x 280g packs cod loins (4 loins)

For the salad

- 2 red onions, finely chopped
- 1 lemon, juiced
- 30g pack of coriander, finely chopped
- 1 red chilli, finely chopped
- 2 small bananas, peeled and sliced

1 Boil the rice for 25 mins, until tender. Meanwhile, heat the oil in a wide, non-stick pan over a medium heat and fry the onions and ginger for 8-10 mins, covered, until softened. Add the courgette, spices and stock, then cover and simmer for 10 mins, until the courgette is tender. Take off the heat.

2 Blitz the mixture in the pan with a hand blender until smooth, then return to a low heat and stir in the ground almonds and yogurt.

3 Submerge the cod in the sauce and cook, covered, for 8-10 mins until the fish flakes easily. Meanwhile, combine half the onions, lemon juice, coriander, chilli and banana slices to make a salad. Serve half the rice with half the korma and the salad. Leave the remainder to cool completely, then chill to eat another day with the rest of the salad. *Will keep chilled in an airtight container for two days. Reheat in a pan over a low heat or microwave until piping hot.*

GOOD TO KNOW healthy • low fat • folate • fibre • vit c • iron • 2 of 5-a-day • gluten free

PER SERVING 527 kcals • fat 12g • saturates 4g • carbs 65g • sugars 15g • fibre 7g • protein 35g • salt 0.7g

Loaded potato skins with speedy baked beans

SERVES 2 **PREP** 10 mins
COOK 1 hr 5 mins **EASY** **V**

- 2 baking potatoes (about 250g each)
- drizzle of rapeseed oil
- 50g mature cheddar, finely grated
- 2 spring onions, white parts finely chopped (save the green parts for another recipe)

For the beans

- 1/2 tsp rapeseed oil
- 2 garlic cloves, finely grated
- 2 tbsp tomato purée
- 1 tbsp balsamic vinegar
- 1 tsp smoked paprika
- 400g can cannellini beans

1 Heat the oven to 220C/200C fan/gas 7. Rub the potatoes with a small drop of the oil, then put on a baking tray and bake for 50 mins, until almost tender. Toss the cheese and onion together and set aside.

2 Meanwhile, make the beans. Heat the rest of the oil in a small non-stick pan and fry the garlic over a low heat for about a minute. Add the tomato purée, vinegar and paprika and cook, stirring, for about a minute more. Tip in the beans and the liquid from the can. Cook for a few mins so the beans are coated in the sauce, then turn off the heat. Set aside.

3 After the potatoes have had their 50 mins, remove from the oven and halve lengthways. Carefully scoop out some of the flesh from each half to create a shell with an even layer of potato all the way round. Don't take out too much, just about 50g from each potato (don't waste this – save it to add to soups, curries, or even Spanish-style omelettes). Pile the cheese and onion into the potato halves, then return to the oven for 15 mins, until golden. To serve, gently reheat the beans and spoon on top of the potatoes.

GOOD TO KNOW healthy • low fat • low cal • fibre • gluten free
PER SERVING 414 kcals • fat 10g • saturates 5g • carbs 54g • sugars 8g • fibre 13g • protein 20g • salt 1g

Thai red duck with sticky pineapple rice

SERVES 2 **PREP** 20 mins plus marinating and steaming **COOK** 15 mins **EASY**

- 2 duck breasts, skin removed
- 1 tbsp Thai red curry paste
- 1 lime, zested and juiced, plus extra wedges to serve
- 140g jasmine rice
- 125ml light coconut milk
- 140g frozen peas
- 50g beansprouts
- ½ red onion, diced
- 100g fresh pineapple, cubed
- 1 red chilli, deseeded and chopped
- ¼ small pack coriander, stalks finely chopped, leaves roughly chopped

1 Sit a duck breast between 2 sheets of cling film on a chopping board. Bash with a rolling pin until roughly 0.5cm thick. Repeat with the other duck breast, then put them both in a dish. Mix the curry paste with the lime zest and juice, and rub all over the duck. Leave to marinate for 20 mins.

2 Meanwhile, tip the rice into a small saucepan with some salt. Pour over the coconut milk plus 150ml water. Bring to a simmer, then cover the pan, turn the heat to low and cook for 5 mins more. Stir in the peas, cover, turn the heat off and leave for another 10 mins.

3 After 10 mins, check the rice – all the liquid should be absorbed and the rice cooked through. Put the beansprouts and red onion in a colander and pour over a kettleful of boiling water. Stir the beansprouts and onion into the rice along with the pineapple, chilli and coriander stalks. Season to taste, and put the lid back on to keep warm.

4 Heat a griddle pan and cook the duck for 1-2 mins on each side, or until cooked to your liking. Stir most of the coriander leaves though the rice with a fork to fluff up. Slice the duck and serve with the rice, scattered with the remaining coriander.

GOOD TO KNOW healthy • low fat • folate • fibre • vit c • iron • 2 of 5-a-day

PER SERVING 500 kcals • fat 9g • saturates 4g • carbs 63g • sugars 10g • fibre 7g • protein 37g • salt 0.6g

Corn, coconut & lentil chowder

Lentils, onions and sweetcorn give this dish valuable fibre for a healthy digestive system.

SERVES 6 **PREP** 10 mins
COOK 40 mins **EASY** **V**

- 1 tbsp rapeseed oil
- 2 onions, chopped
- 4 garlic cloves, chopped
- 2 red chillies, deseeded and chopped
- 2 tbsp medium curry powder
- 2 tsp cumin seeds
- 2 tsp ground turmeric
- 250g red lentils
- 2 litres vegetable stock, made with 3 tsp bouillon powder
- 600g frozen sweetcorn
- 600g potatoes, diced
- 280g coconut yogurt
- 10g coriander, chopped

1 Heat the oil in a large pan over a medium heat and fry the onions for 8 mins, stirring often, until softened. Stir in the garlic, chillies, curry powder, cumin seeds, turmeric and lentils, and cook for a few mins more. Pour in the stock and sweetcorn. Bring to the boil, then cover, reduce the heat and simmer for 15-20 mins, or until the lentils are tender.

2 Remove from the heat and briefly blitz the soup using a hand blender – you don't want it to be completely smooth. Add the potatoes, then cover and return to a medium heat for 10-15 mins more, or until the potatoes are tender. Take off the heat and stir in the yogurt and coriander to serve.

GOOD TO KNOW vegan • healthy • low fat • low cal • fibre • vit c • iron • 3 of 5-a-day • gluten free
PER SERVING 361 kcals • fat 8g • saturates 5g • carbs 50g • sugars 8g • fibre 10g • protein 17g • salt 0.9g

Cinnamon porridge with baked bananas

SERVES 2 **PREP** 5 mins
COOK 8 mins **EASY** **V**

80g porridge oats
150ml semi-skimmed milk
½ tsp ground cinnamon
1 large ripe banana, halved lengthways and widthways
½ orange, zested and juiced
200g plain bio yogurt
2 tsp toasted three-seed mix

1 Put the oats, milk, cinnamon and 450ml water in a pan. Bring to the boil, then turn the heat to low and cook for 5 mins, stirring often, until thickened.

2 Meanwhile, put the bananas in a dish with the orange zest and juice. Cover and microwave on high for 90 secs-2 mins until softened. Serve the porridge in bowls, topped with the yogurt, bananas and seeds.

GOOD TO KNOW healthy • low fat • calcium • vit c
PER SERVING 360 kcals • fat 9g • saturates 3g • carbs 52g • sugars 23g • fibre 5g • protein 14g • salt 0.3g

Oven-baked bhajis

SERVES 4 **PREP** 15 mins
COOK 30 mins **EASY** **V**

- 80g gram flour
- 1 tbsp medium curry powder
- 1 tsp cumin seeds
- 1 tsp ground turmeric
- ½ tsp vegetable bouillon powder
- 1 tbsp tomato purée
- 2 eggs
- 1 large carrot, coarsely grated
- 2-3 onions, halved and thinly sliced
- 2 tbsp chopped ginger
- 2 tsp rapeseed oil, plus extra for the tray

For the lemon rice

- 2 tsp rapeseed oil
- 150g easy-cook brown rice
- ½ tsp cumin seeds
- ½ tsp ground turmeric
- ½ tsp cinnamon
- 400ml hot vegetable stock, made with ½ tsp bouillon powder
- 2 thick strips of lemon peel (from the lemon in the salad, below)

For the salad

- 70g coconut yogurt
- ½ lemon, juiced
- 400g can chickpeas, drained
- ⅓ pack of coriander, chopped
- 4 tomatoes, chopped
- 170g carrots, cut into thin strips or coarsely grated
- 1 red chilli, deseeded and chopped (optional)

1 Heat the oven to 200C/180C fan/gas 6. Mix the flour with the spices and bouillon, and the tomato purée with the eggs. Toss the carrot, onion and ginger in the flour mix. Pour in the eggs, mix well, then stir in the oil.

2 Oil a large baking tray. Spoon on 12 neat mounds of batter. Bake for 20-25 mins until golden.

3 For the rice, heat the oil in a pan over a medium heat and fry the rice and spices for 1 min. Add the stock and lemon peel. Simmer for 20-25 mins until the rice is tender and the liquid is absorbed.

4 Mix the salad ingredients together and serve with the bhajis and rice. You can also eat half now and half later if you prefer – if doing this, cool the remaining bhajis and rice and keep chilled with the rest of the salad for up to three days. Reheat the bhajis at 180C/160C fan/gas 4 for 10-15 mins until piping hot. Reheat the rice in the microwave and serve with the salad.

GOOD TO KNOW healthy • low fat • low cal • calcium • folate • fibre • vit c • iron • 4 of 5-a-day • gluten free
PER SERVING 480 kcals • fat 12g • saturates 3g • carbs 68g • sugars 15g • fibre 14g • protein 18g • salt 0.6g

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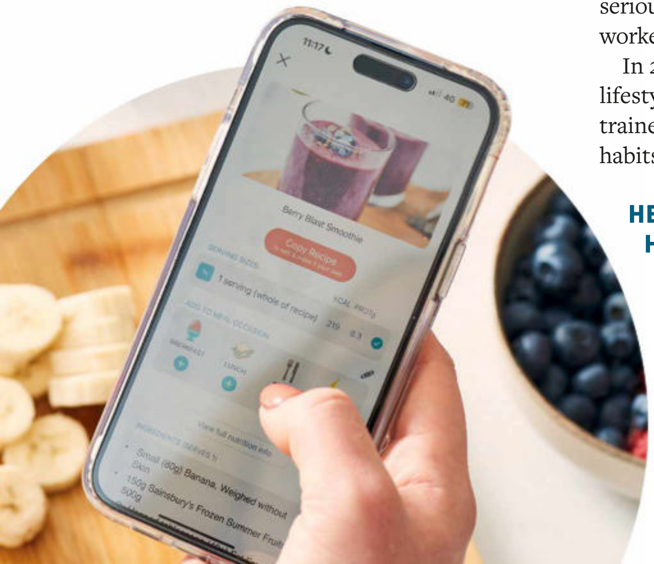
BEFORE

"Nutracheck has been life-changing"

Since reaching her fitness goals with Nutracheck, Amber has seen her confidence skyrocket. Here, she shares her story



When Amber started her journey with Nutracheck, the handy calorie-counting app, she'd struggled with comfort eating for as long as she could remember. But, when the pandemic hit, reports claimed those with a higher BMI could be more susceptible to serious illness, so the 23-year-old early years worker decided to make some changes.

In 2021, she underwent a complete lifestyle overhaul – she hired a personal trainer and took back control of her eating habits with help from Nutracheck.

HEALTHIER BODY, HEALTHIER MIND

"I had always turned to food if I was stressed or unhappy and would often eat in secret," she says. "But once I got into the swing of using the app, I found it so easy to use. I like that it has pictures and a barcode scanner to make the process really straightforward."

Before long, Amber – who at her heaviest weighed 22st and is now 14st 7lb – not only noticed a physical change, but a mental one, too.

"I'm so much happier now and so many people have commented on how much more confident I am. I'm doing things I wouldn't have done three years ago. I enter fitness competitions, I run and I go to the gym six times a week. Before, I would never have stepped foot in the gym, but because I feel good, I'm getting myself out there."

In May 2023, Amber took her new-found love of fitness one step further and walked the length of Scotland's West Highland Way, a 96-mile stretch that takes you from Milngavie to Fort William. And she wants to continue to challenge herself, so she's signed up to run the London Marathon in 2024.

She credits Nutracheck with helping her turn her health and fitness around for the better. So, what advice would she give to others who are thinking about downloading the app? "Just go for it. It doesn't take long to use, and it really will change your life."

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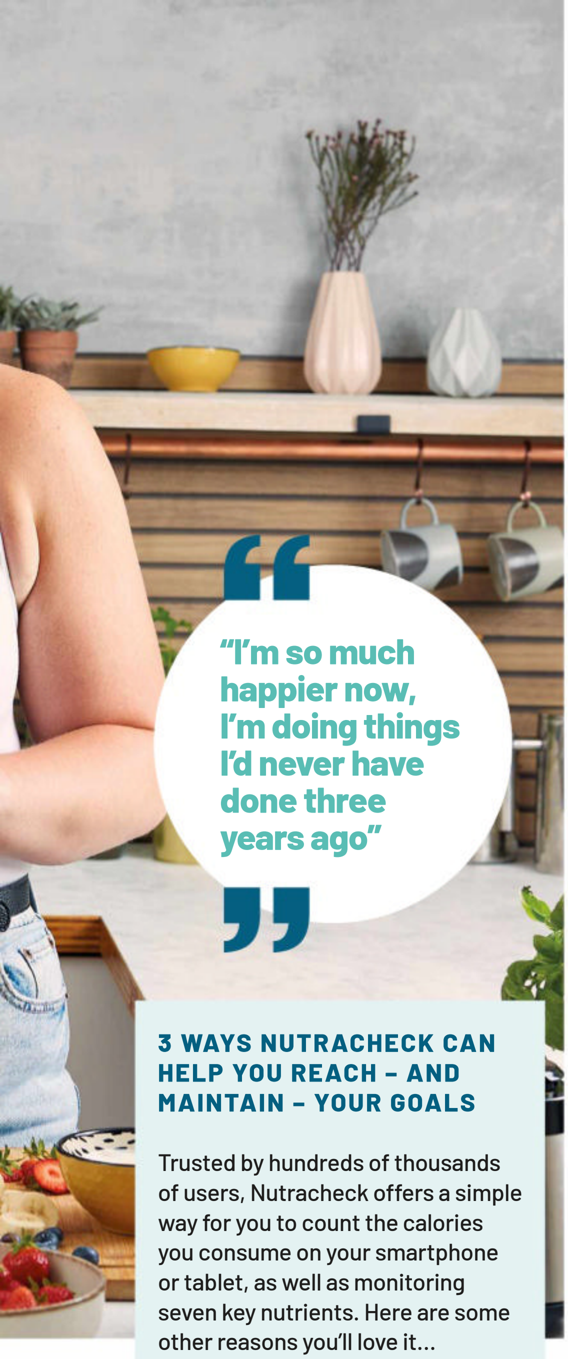


> “I’m so much happier now, I’d doing things I’d never have done three years ago”

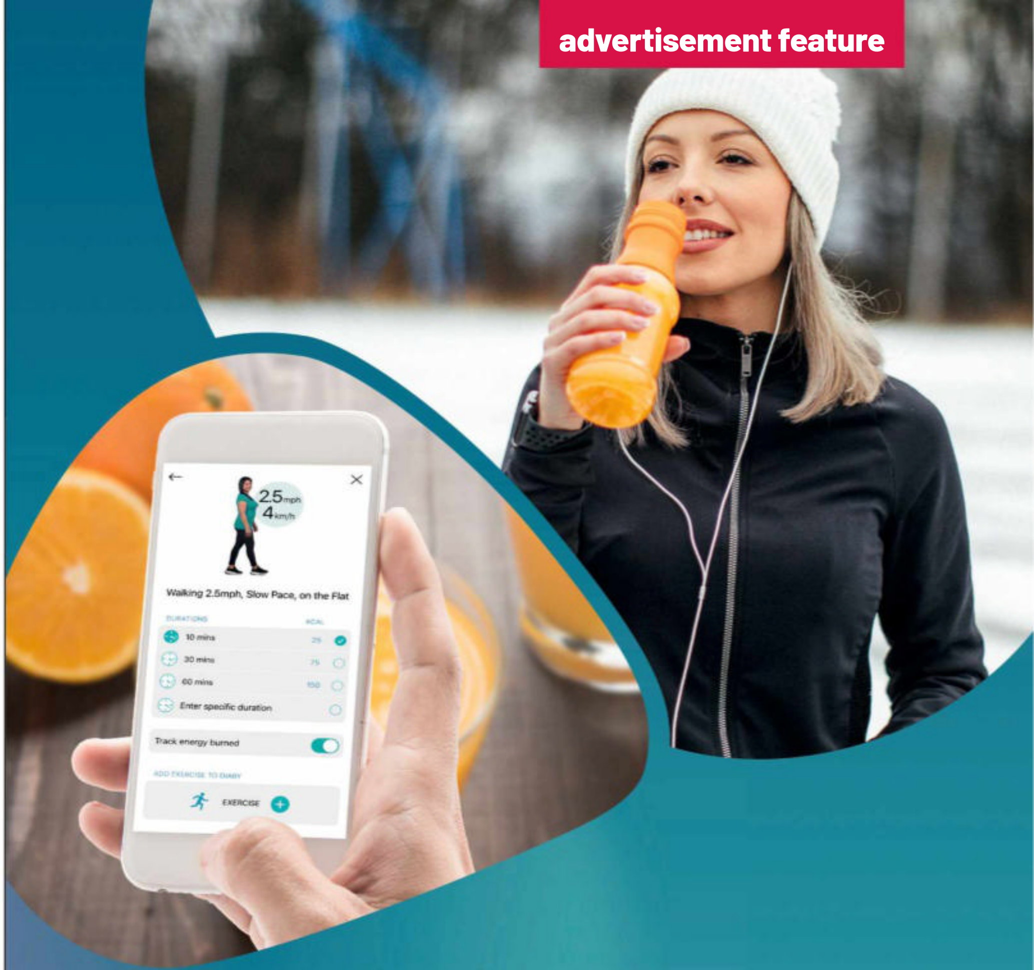
3 WAYS NUTRACHECK CAN HELP YOU REACH – AND MAINTAIN – YOUR GOALS

Trusted by hundreds of thousands of users, Nutracheck offers a simple way for you to count the calories you consume on your smartphone or tablet, as well as monitoring seven key nutrients. Here are some other reasons you’ll love it…

You’ll be in good company
Join loads of like-minded members in the Nutracheck forums to share your challenges and successes. The helpful community is on hand to assist and support you seven days a week, 365 days a year.

You don’t need anything else
It’s an all-in-one app to help you reach your weight goal. It has a UK food database of 430,000 products, plus it features a barcode scanner to make searching easy.

It’s an app you can trust
Nutracheck’s App Store rating is 4.8 out of 5 stars – making it the top-rated calorie tracking app – so you can rest assured you’re in safe hands.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Walking 2.5mph, Slow Pace, on the Flat
DURATIONS
KCAL
10 mins
25
30 mins
75
60 mins
150
Enter specific duration
Track energy burned
ADD EXERCISE TO DIARY
EXERCISE

Kickstart your goals

Are you ready to try something new in 2025? With Nutracheck, the UK’s top-rated calorie and nutrient tracking app, you can continue to eat your favourite foods and achieve your health resolutions. No fads, no banned foods, no hassle.

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Start your 7-day FREE TRIAL today.
Download the app by scanning the QR code, or register at nutracheck.co.uk

Download on the App Store
GET IT ON Google Play
★★★★★

4.8 rating - iOS App Store. Correct at time of print

Your guide to intermittent fasting

Is fasting healthy and is it an effective way to lose weight? We discuss the benefits and pitfalls of fasting, and the difference between the 5:2 and 16:8 fasting diets

Intermittent fasting refers to an eating plan that involves switching between periods of fasting and periods of eating on a timed schedule. Its popularity has increased as more reports suggest it may be a way to manage weight and prevent certain health conditions or potentially put them into remission.

In recent years, media attention on fasting diets such as 5:2 have made this form of dieting a popular choice.

How to follow an intermittent fasting plan

Some popular intermittent fasting eating patterns include:

- Time-restricted eating – you select an eating window and refrain from eating outside of this. For example, the 16:8 diet involves fasting for 16 hours per day and eating within the remaining eight-hour window. One of the most common ways to do this is by skipping breakfast and eating only between midday and 8pm, which means you are fasting for 16 hours between each period of eating. Other variations of the diet involve eating for periods of 6 hours or less.
- Fasting days – you choose a regular day of the week or month during which to fast over 24 hours. For example, if you finish dinner at 8pm one evening, you'd then refrain from eating until 8pm the next day.
- Alternate-day fasting – you choose certain days of the week to consume very few calories, while eating a normal number of calories during the rest of the week. For example, the 5:2 diet involves eating only 25% of a normal calorie intake (500 kcals for women or 600 kcals for men) on two non-consecutive days of the week, then eating a normal and unrestricted amount on the other five.
- Fasting mimicking diet – this involves a reduced-calorie diet but with a specific breakdown of macro- and micronutrients, conducted on five days of the month.

How does intermittent fasting work?

The theory behind intermittent fasting is that, after a period of hours without eating, the body switches from the ready supply of energy from food to burning its fat stores. It's worth noting that there is still a lot for us to learn about this metabolic switch, including what the optimal fasting pattern and calorie limit should be to optimise its effects.

What foods can you eat?

Unlike most diets, intermittent fasting focuses on *when* rather than *what* you eat. For this reason, there are no restrictions on foods during the scheduled eating window, and you are encouraged to eat 'normally'. However, if you use your eating window to consume high-energy foods and treats, you are unlikely to reap the benefits of the plan.

What can you drink while fasting?

Drinks are restricted during your fasting period, when you should stick to water and zero-calorie drinks such as black, unsweetened tea, coffee or herbal teas. During your eating window there are no restrictions on what you can drink

Is intermittent fasting effective for weight loss, and is it sustainable?

Studies suggest that intermittent fasting is as effective at promoting weight loss as a calorie-counted diet for those who are overweight or obese. Results vary, however, depending on your individual circumstances and the amount of weight you have to lose.

That said, the evidence to support intermittent fasting (and particularly alternate-day fasting) as a weight-loss tool is increasing. However, more research is needed – especially with regard to how effective intermittent fasting is in the longer term. One small, short-term study suggested the weight lost by a group of male subjects during the early stages of the fast was predominantly a loss of water, protein and other lean tissue rather than fat.

The success of the approach may also depend on your ability to maintain this style of eating going forward. Some research suggests a weight plateau after six months. This may be because intermittent fasting is not so much a diet as it is a programme of eating, which means that sustaining the weight loss is down to how well you are able to adapt to the eating patterns in the longer term.

What's the evidence for intermittent fasting?

As well as weight loss, studies have linked intermittent fasting with:

- a reduced risk of cancer and heart disease
- an extended lifespan
- some protection against age-related diseases including chronic pain syndromes
- a protective effect against cognitive decline
- improved resistance to stress and disease
- an increase in the number of beneficial bacteria in the gut

This is still an emerging area of research though, and these links are as yet inconclusive.

Is intermittent fasting healthy? A nutritionist's view....

Much of the emphasis of these diets is on the fasting stage, but in order to be safe, effective and healthy, the food consumed during your 'eating window' needs to be of high nutritional value. For this reason, you should aim to include essential fats from oily fish, nuts and seeds, lean sources of protein, wholegrains and starchy carbs, and plenty of fruit and vegetables to supply dietary fibre, vitamins and minerals.

During the first two to four weeks of the programme, some followers report feeling hungry and irritable, and experiencing migraines as their body gets accustomed to intermittent fasting. It's also worth remembering that few studies have examined the long-term effects (longer than six months) of intermittent fasting on humans.

If you're considering this form of diet, you should first consult your GP or medical practitioner to confirm it is appropriate and safe for you. Many people find that a moderate fast, finishing all food by 7pm and then waiting until 7-8am the next day before eating breakfast can offer a more sustainable approach, while still reaping some of the perceived benefits.

Who should be careful when considering fasting?

If you are pregnant, breastfeeding, diabetic or have a condition that requires you to keep a close eye on your blood sugar levels, you should avoid fasting.

Vulnerable groups who should exercise caution may include:

- the elderly
- those under 18 years of age
- those who are on medication (especially if it needs to be taken with food at set times)
- those who have a low body mass index (BMI less than 18.5)
- those with emotional or psychological issues around food, including any history of eating disorders

For women of reproductive age, the timing of a fast may be best performed during the follicular (early) stage of the menstrual cycle. For those at other stages of their reproductive life, such as the perimenopause, it may be best to minimise the length of each fast. Research to date is limited in this area and more is needed before we can fully understand the implications of fasting on hormonal health.

> "The evidence to support intermittent fasting as a weight-loss tool is increasing"

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Photographs: WESTEND 61 / GETTY, ISTOCK / GETTY IMAGES PLUS

All about the Atkins diet

One of the first low-carb diets to go mainstream, the Atkins diet has received a lot of hype. But does it really help with weight loss?

> Foods low in carbs such as fats and meat are permitted

What is the Atkins diet?

In 1963, American physician and cardiologist Robert Atkins discovered a study which suggested cutting out starch and sugar could lead to significant weight loss. Atkins tested the diet himself and noticed impressive results. He released a book, *Dr Atkins' Diet Revolution*, in 1972, which has gone on to become one of the bestselling weight loss books of all time.

How does the Atkins diet work?

Atkins is similar to keto as both emphasise the consumption of fat and protein but severely restrict carbs. This essentially forces the body to switch from burning carbs for energy to burning fat.

How to follow the Atkins diet

There are three Atkins plans – Atkins20, Atkins40 and Atkins100 – which permit different amounts of 'net carbs' per day to suit different dietary goals.

'Net carbs' is a familiar but unregulated term that refers to the gram weight of carbs that impact your blood sugar levels. The figure is calculated by subtracting the amount of indigestible carbs (insoluble fibre and some sugar alcohols) from total carbs. However, this calculation is rarely reliable or an exact science.

> The Atkins diet essentially forces the body to switch from burning carbs for energy to burning fat

What foods to eat

Foods low in carbs such as fats, oils, fish, meat and eggs are permitted, as well as diet soda, broth, tea and coffee. A certain amount of 'foundation' vegetables are advised (the equivalent of 12-15g net carbs per day). These include spinach, lettuce, watercress and sprouts. To achieve their five-a-day, dieters need to understand which fruit and veg are low in carbs. Good choices include courgette, cucumber, leafy greens, avocado and olives.

Foods to avoid include starchy vegetables like corn and potatoes; fruits with a high sugar content such as pineapple, mango and banana; baked goods such as biscuits and cakes; and refined carbs like white bread, pasta and rice.

What's the evidence for Atkins?

Studies examining the effectiveness of low-carb diets like Atkins report faster weight loss at 6 months than a low-fat, calorie-restricted regime, though no difference after 12 months. Other benefits include reduced cravings, especially for sweet foods, and improved blood sugar balance.

Studies also suggest that following a low-carb diet, like Atkins, may alter your gut microbiota. This may have a detrimental effect on the production of short-chain fatty acids, which play a protective role both in the gut and for your general health.

In the short term, weight loss is achieved at a relatively fast rate. Over the longer term however, there is no evidence that Atkins is any more effective than a standard calorie-restricted weight loss plan.

Is the Atkins diet healthy? A nutritionist's view...

Most health professionals believe that cutting out major food groups, such as carbs, is detrimental to long-term health. Critics of high-protein diets fear it may have an adverse effect on bone health, as well as renal function for those with an existing kidney condition. Currently, we don't know the risks of following a low-carb diet over the longer term because most studies have lasted two years or less.

The restrictions of the Atkins diet aren't so strenuous with these simple and tasty recipes

Mushroom brunch

With just a few simple ingredients you can put together this comforting gluten-free dish.

SERVES 4 **PREP** 5 mins
COOK 15 mins **EASY** V

250g mushrooms
1 garlic clove
1 tbsp olive oil
160g bag kale
4 eggs

1 Slice the mushrooms and crush the garlic clove. Heat the olive oil in a large non-stick frying pan, then fry the garlic over a low heat for 1 min. Add the mushrooms and cook until soft, then add the kale. If the kale won't all fit in the pan, add half and stir until wilted, then add the rest. Once all the kale is wilted, season.

2 Crack in the eggs and cook gently for 2-3 mins, then cover with a lid and cook for a further 2-3 mins, or until the eggs are cooked to your liking. Season well with black pepper and serve.

GOOD TO KNOW healthy • low fat • 1 of 5-a-day • gluten free
PER SERVING 154 kcals • fat 11g • saturates 2g • carbs 1g • sugars 1g • fibre 2g • protein 13g • salt 0.4g

Lamb koftas

SERVES 8 **PREP** 10 mins
COOK 10 mins **EASY**

500g lamb mince
1 tsp ground cumin
2 tsp ground coriander
2 fat garlic cloves, crushed
1 tbsp chopped mint
oil, for brushing
yogurt, salad and flatbreads, to serve

1 Mix together all the ingredients with some seasoning until well blended. Divide into eight balls, then roll each ball on a board with a cupped hand to form them into oval shapes. Thread onto four metal skewers, two per skewer, and brush with the oil.

2 Heat a griddle pan until you can feel a good heat rising, then cook the koftas for 3-4 mins each side. Don't turn until they are well sealed, or the meat may stick to the pan.

3 Season, then serve with yogurt, salad and flatbreads, if you like.

GOOD TO KNOW gluten free
PER SERVING 141 kcals • fat 9g • saturates 4g • carbs 2g • sugars g • fibre 1g • protein 13g • salt 0.2g

Chicken breast with avocado salad

SERVES 1 **PREP** 10 mins
COOK 10 mins **EASY**

- 1 skinless chicken breast
- 2 tsp olive oil
- 1 heaped tsp smoked paprika
- ½ small avocado, diced
- 1 tsp red wine vinegar
- 1 tbsp parsley, roughly chopped
- 1 medium tomato, chopped
- ½ small red onion, thinly sliced

1 Heat the grill to medium. Rub the chicken all over with 1 tsp of the olive oil and the paprika. Cook for 4-5 mins each side until lightly charred and cooked through.

2 Mix the rest of the ingredients together to make a salad, season and add the rest of the oil. Thickly slice the chicken and serve with salad.

PER SERVING 344 kcals • fat 20g • saturates 4g • carbs 9g • sugars 5g • fibre 3g • protein 32g • salt 0.2g

Pan-fried salmon

SERVES 2 **PREP** 5 mins
COOK 10 mins **EASY**

2 x 150g salmon fillets, skin on
$^1/_2$ tbsp olive oil
20g unsalted butter
$^1/_2$ lemon, juiced
Steamed asparagus and long-stem broccoli, to serve

1 Generously season the salmon fillets with salt and pepper. Put the oil and butter in a non-stick frying pan over a medium heat. Swirl around the pan until melted and foaming, then turn up the heat.
2 Once the butter starts bubbling, add the salmon fillets skin-side down and fry for 3 mins, until crisp. Flip the fillets over, lower the heat and cook for 2 mins more, then drizzle over the lemon juice. Transfer the salmon to a plate and baste with any of the buttery juices left in the pan. Serve with steamed greens.

GOOD TO KNOW gluten free
PER SERVING 386 kcals • fat 29g • saturates 9g • carbs none • sugars none • fibre none • protein 31g • salt 0.2g

Warm lemon & thyme chicken salad

SERVES 4 **PREP** 10 mins **COOK** 10 mins
EASY

4 boneless, skinless chicken breasts, cut into strips
1 lemon, zested and juiced
a few sprigs of fresh thyme (or 1 tsp dried)
3 tbsp oil
150g bag mixed salad leaves
1 small red onion, thinly sliced
squeeze of garlic paste or 1 garlic clove, crushed
handful pitted black olives, halved
crusty bread, to serve (optional)

1 Put the chicken strips in a bowl and add the lemon zest and thyme. Season well with salt and black pepper, then mix everything together. Heat 1 tbsp oil in a pan. Fry the chicken for 8-10 mins, until golden and cooked through. Meanwhile, spread the leaves and onion over a large platter or salad bowl.
2 Add the garlic paste and olives to the pan, then fry for 1 min more. Spoon the chicken and olives onto the leaves. Take the pan off the heat then add the rest of the oil and lemon juice. Stir well, scraping off any bits from the bottom of the pan. Check the seasoning, then pour over the chicken and salad. Serve with crusty bread, if you like.

GOOD TO KNOW healthy
PER SERVING 245 kcals • fat 11g • saturates 2g • carbs 2g • sugars 2g • fibre 1g • protein 34g • salt 0.72g

Mackerel with warm cauliflower & caper salad

SERVES 2 **PREP** 5 mins
COOK 10 mins **EASY**

- 300g cauliflower, cut into florets
- 1 lemon
- 4 tsp capers, rinsed
- ½ small bunch flat-leaf parsley, chopped
- ½ small bunch mint, chopped
- 2 tsp olive oil
- 1 small garlic clove, crushed
- 2 large or 4 small mackerel fillets

1 Heat the grill and bring a pan of water to the boil. Cook the cauliflower in the water for 4-5 mins until just tender. Zest and juice half the lemon, then mix with the capers, parsley, mint, olive oil and garlic in a salad bowl. When the cauliflower is cooked, drain, then stir into the herby dressing with some seasoning while still hot.

2 Put the mackerel on a baking tray, zest the remaining lemon half over it, season, then grill for a couple of mins on each side. Cut the lemon into wedges and serve alongside the mackerel and cauliflower salad.

GOOD TO KNOW vit c • omega-3
PER SERVING 392 kcals • fat 27g • saturates 5g • carbs 5g • sugars 4g • fibre 3g • protein 32g • salt 0.9g

Photographs: ISTOCK / GETTY IMAGES PLUS, CARLOSGAW / E+, ISTETIANA / MOMENT / GETTY

Mushroom & basil omelette with smashed tomato

SERVES 2 **PREP** 5 mins
COOK 15 mins **EASY** **V**

2 tomatoes, halved
3 eggs
1 tbsp chopped chives
1 tsp unsalted butter
300g chestnut mushrooms, sliced
2 tbsp low-fat cream cheese
1 tbsp finely chopped basil leaves

1 Heat the grill to its highest setting. Grill the tomatoes on a square of foil, turning occasionally to prevent burning. When the tomatoes are lightly charred, remove from the grill, squashing them slightly to release their juices.
2 Crack the eggs into a bowl, add a splash of water and mix with a fork. Add the chives, season well and beat some more. Set aside while you prepare the mushrooms.
3 In a non-stick frying pan, heat the butter over a medium heat until foaming. Add the mushrooms, season and cook for 5-8 mins until tender, stirring occasionally. Remove from the pan and set aside.
4 Add the egg mixture to the pan, tilting the pan so the mixture covers the entire base, and leave for 10 secs or so until it begins to set. Start to gently stir the egg with a fork so that any unset mixture gets cooked.
5 While the egg mixture is still slightly loose, spoon the mushrooms onto one side of the omelette and top with the cream cheese and basil leaves. Flip the other side of the omelette over to cover, if you like. Cook for 1 min more, then cut in half and slide each half onto a plate. Serve immediately with the tomatoes on the side.

GOOD TO KNOW healthy • folate • 2 of 5-a-day
PER SERVING 196 kcals • fat 14g • saturates 5g • carbs 4g • sugars 4g • fibre 3g • protein 14g • salt 0.5g

What is the raw food diet?

Proponents believe that raw food contains higher nutrient levels and that cooking can destroy important enzymes in food. But is a raw food diet as healthy as it seems?

How does the raw food diet work?

A raw food diet typically consists of 50-100% raw food, including fruit, vegetables, nuts, seeds, fermented and sprouted grains and beans. Any foodstuff that hasn't been heated or warmed above 48C is usually categorised as 'raw'.

Raw food diets are generally plant-based, though with a lower grain content than a typical vegan diet. Some people consume unpasteurised dairy products, and raw (sometimes dehydrated or dried) meat and fish. Processed or refined foods, including pasteurised or tinned goods, are usually forbidden.

Is the raw food diet healthy?

Following a raw food diet means you are more likely to get your five-a-day and achieve the recommended levels of fibre. You'll be cutting added sugar and salt too. However, the challenge is getting adequate protein, vitamin B12 and iron, as these nutrients are typically found in foods most of us prefer to cook, such as meat, fish, eggs and grains.

Pregnant or breastfeeding women, the elderly or very young, and anyone with a chronic illness, or who has or is recovering from an eating disorder, should check with their GP before going on a raw food diet. If you do choose to follow a raw food diet, it's important to know exactly what to

> Including plenty of raw food in your diet makes it likely you'll consume a good amount of fruit and veg

eat for a balanced intake of nutrients, and to be aware of the potential for food-borne pathogens that may put you at increased risk of food poisoning.

What's the evidence for the raw food diet?

Studies, although limited in number, suggest those who follow such a plan have a lower BMI than omnivores, and are more likely to fall into the 'underweight' category. They also tend to have a lower bone mass, and women are more likely to experience disruptions to their menstrual cycle.

Differences in nutrient levels between raw and cooked foods depend on the individual foodstuff. Some nutrients are more sensitive to heat but others, such as vitamins A, D, E and K, are unaffected. There is no scientific evidence that cooking destroys natural enzymes in food, making it harder to digest. It's actually more likely that cooking helps break down cell walls so we can digest cooked foods more easily (especially starches and proteins).

A nutritionist's view...

Whether you choose to eat your fruit and veg raw or cooked, these tips will help you get the most out of them:

- Buy local: some vitamins are lost during transportation and storage
- Store tomatoes at room temperature to optimise lycopene levels
- Prepare fruit or veg just before you need them
- Choose cooking methods that use the lowest heat for the least amount of time. Microwaving, steaming and stir-frying are useful methods.
- Finally, balance your intake. Enjoy some veg raw to top up on vitamin C, and cook others for their mix of protective antioxidants.

Does the raw food diet work?

Including plenty of raw food in your diet makes it likely you'll consume a good amount of fruit and veg, which obviously has health benefits. It's also likely you'll eat less ultra-processed food. However, the difficulty of including sufficient protein, vitamin B12 and iron in a raw food diet means it's important that the principles of a balanced diet are followed.

Enjoy these imaginative no-cook meals as you follow the raw food diet

Chipotle gazpacho

SERVES 4 **PREP** 25 mins plus at least 2 hrs chilling **NO COOK EASY V**

1kg ripe tomatoes, roughly chopped
1 large red pepper, roughly chopped
½ cucumber, sliced
1 small garlic clove, grated
4 spring onions, finely sliced
40g blanched almonds, roughly chopped
3 limes, juiced
2 tbsp olive oil
2 tsp chipotle paste
1 large, ripe avocado, cubed
1 small red chilli, deseeded and finely chopped
½ small bunch coriander, finely chopped

1 Put the tomatoes, pepper, cucumber and garlic, half the spring onions, almonds and lime juice, and all the olive oil and chipotle paste into a blender. Whizz until almost smooth, then pour into a jug and chill for at least 2 hrs.

2 When ready to eat, toss the avocado, chilli and coriander with the rest of the spring onions and lime juice. Ladle the soup into four bowls and top with the avocado salsa and remaining almonds.

GOOD TO KNOW vegan • healthy • folate • fibre • vit c • 3 of 5-a-day • gluten free

PER SERVING 277 kcals • fat 21g • saturates 3g • carbs 12g • sugars 11g • fibre 6g • protein 6g • salt 0.1g

Açaí bowl

SERVES 1 **PREP** 5 mins **NO COOK**
EASY V

2 tsp açaí powder
handful frozen berries
½ a very ripe banana, chopped
1 tsp coconut flakes
5 pineapple chunks, ½ passion fruit, 1 tbsp toasted oats, to serve (optional)

1 Put the açaí powder, berries and banana into a blender with a handful of ice cubes and 100ml water. Blitz until smooth, pour into a bowl, then serve with your choice of toppings.

GOOD TO KNOW vegan • fibre • vit c • 2 of 5-a-day • gluten free
PER SERVING 180 kcals • fat 8g • saturates 5g • carbs 19g • sugars 13g • fibre 7g • protein 3g • salt 0.1g

Salad shirazi (tomato, cucumber & red onion salad)

SERVES 4-6 **PREP** 10 mins
NO COOK EASY V

1 cucumber, peeled and cut into 1cm cubes
6 ripe vine tomatoes, halved, deseeded and chopped into 1cm cubes
1 red onion, finely chopped
200g pomegranate seeds
1-1½ limes, juiced (about 40ml juice)
2-3 tbsp extra virgin olive oil

1 Mix the cucumber, tomatoes, onion and pomegranate seeds together in a mixing bowl. Season well, then add the lime juice and olive oil, mix well again and tip into a serving dish.

GOOD TO KNOW vegan • healthy • low fat • gluten free
PER SERVING 95 kcals • fat 5g • saturates 1g • carbs 10g • sugars 9g • fibre 3g • protein 2g • salt 0.1g

Salmon tartare with apple, dill & gherkins

SERVES 16 **NO COOK EASY**

- 1 tsp caraway seeds
- 700g top quality fresh salmon
- 150g smoked salmon (unsliced)
- 50g shallots, peeled
- small bunch dill
- 75g jar cocktail gherkins, drained
- 1 Granny Smith apple
- 1 lemon, juiced
- 100g horseradish sauce
- 100ml extra virgin olive oil
- 100g crème fraîche
- 1 head of celery, cut into sticks, and rye crackers, to serve

1 Lightly toast the caraway seeds in a dry pan, then set aside to cool. Very finely chop the fresh and smoked salmon, shallots, dill (save a little for the garnish), gherkins and apple. The pieces should be about the size of small peas. This can be done up to a day before serving – if preparing ahead, cover well and refrigerate.

2 Just before serving, season well with flaky salt, and mix in the caraway seeds, lemon juice, horseradish sauce, 50ml extra virgin olive oil and the crème fraîche. Divide the salmon between eight plates, drizzle with the remaining olive oil and sprinkle over the reserved dill. Serve with celery sticks and rye crackers.

GOOD TO KNOW omega-3
PER SERVING 559 kcals • fat 48g • saturates 14g • carbs 5g • sugars 4g • fibre 1g • protein 25g • salt 1.5g

Courgette carpaccio

This is a simple salad with smart presentation. If you want to make it even easier, or for a more rustic look, simply toss all the ingredients together and pile onto two plates. Ricotta salata is the salted, pressed and dried version of ricotta. It is perfect for shaving over salads and pasta dishes. Find it in delis or online.

SERVES 2 **PREP** 10 mins **NO COOK** **V**

1-2 courgettes (a mix of yellow and green ideally)
1 unwaxed lemon, zested and juiced
handful mint leaves
handful toasted pine nuts
handful wild rocket
olive oil, for drizzling
50g ricotta salata, pecorino or parmesan (or vegetarian alternative), shaved

1 Cut the ends off each courgette to make them each about 12cm long. Use a mandoline or Y-shaped peeler to shave 4 thin slices from each courgette (use the offcuts and leftovers for another dish). Arrange the slices with a slight overlap, over two plates (alternate the colour if you're using yellow and green) and trim the edges on the plate to make neat rectangles. Season with flaky sea salt and half the lemon juice. Set aside.

2 Stack the mint leaves together, roll tightly, then finely shred. Scatter the mint, pine nuts and rocket over the courgettes, then drizzle everything generously with olive oil and more lemon juice. Scatter over the cheese and finish with the lemon zest.

GOOD TO KNOW calcium • folate • vit c • 1 of 5-a-day • gluten free

PER SERVING 185 kcals • fat 12g • saturates 5g • carbs 4g • sugars 3g • fibre 2g • protein 13g • salt 1g

Blueberry & coconut frozen 'cheesecake' bars

SERVES 10-12 **PREP** 20 mins plus soaking and freezing **NO COOK**
EASY **V**

280g unsalted cashews
sunflower oil, for the tin
140g unsalted almonds
140g pitted dates, plus 5 for the topping
100g coconut cream
2 tbsp coconut oil, melted
2 tbsp agave syrup
1 tsp vanilla extract
½ lemon, juiced
140g blueberries

1 Tip the cashews into a heatproof bowl. Cover with boiling water and soak for 10 mins, or if you have time, cover in cold water and soak overnight.

2 To make the base, whizz the almonds and 140g dates together in a food processor until finely chopped. Lightly oil a 20cm x 20cm square cake tin. Tip the mixture into the cake tin and press into the base, smoothing out evenly with the back of a spoon. Put in the freezer to firm up while you make the cheesecake layer.

3 Drain the soaked cashews and tip half into the food processor. Add the coconut cream, melted coconut oil, agave syrup, vanilla and lemon juice, and blitz until the mixture is smooth and creamy. Remove the tin from the freezer and spread the mixture over the base. Put back in the freezer for another 30-40 mins to firm up.

4 To make the topping, blitz the rest of the dates and most of the blueberries with the remaining cashews in the food processor. Take the tin out of the freezer again and spoon the topping over, then scatter with the reserved blueberries. Return to the freezer for at least an hour to firm up. Take out of the freezer 10 mins before serving, then slice into bars to serve. *Will keep frozen for up to two months.*

GOOD TO KNOW vegan • gluten free
PER SERVING (12) 329 kcals • fat 21g • saturates 6g • carbs 24g • sugars 20g • fibre 3g • protein 8g • salt none

Vegan key lime pie

This vegan dessert makes clever use of avocado and cashews to achieve a creamy texture.

SERVES 12 **PREP** 25 mins plus soaking and chilling **NO COOK EASY V**

1 lime, zested, plus a few thin slices to decorate (optional)

For the crust

225g pitted dates
100g walnuts
45g desiccated coconut
30g cacao powder

For the filling

200g cashew nuts, soaked for 4-6 hrs
240ml lime juice (you'll need about 8 limes)
1½ ripe avocados
½ ripe mango
210g coconut oil, melted
110g agave nectar

1 First, make the crust. Whizz the dates, walnuts, desiccated coconut and cacao along with 1 tsp salt in a food processor. Tip into a 23cm loose-based tart tin and press evenly into the base and sides of the tin with your hands.

2 For the filling, blend all the ingredients in a blender on a high-speed setting, or pulse in a standard blender, until smooth and creamy.

3 Pour the filling onto the crust and shake the tin a little to even it out. Chill for at least 3 hrs to set. Decorate with the lime zest and slices, if you like. *Will keep in the freezer for up to 2 months, or defrosted in the fridge for 1 week.*

GOOD TO KNOW vegan • gluten free
PER SERVING 477 kcals • fat 38g • saturates 20g • carbs 26g • sugars 22g • fibre 5g • protein 7g • salt 0.4g

Introduction to the Blue Zones diet

Named after the locations where people are said to live the longest, this eating plan centres on the typical foods and traditions of these cultures, with the aim of boosting longevity

There are five locations around the world dubbed Blue Zones. The term was coined after researchers marked the locations on a map with blue circles. The Blue Zone theory suggests these communities prove you don't need to win the genetic lottery to live a long and healthy life.

Where are the Blue Zones?

Okinawa, Japan
Home to some of the world's longest-lived people, Okinawa has a diet that's low in calories yet dense in nutrients. Okinawans adopt the principle of 'hara hachi bu' – eat until you are 80% full. They also enjoy secure social networks and a strong sense of purpose.

Nuoro Province, Sardinia
This Italian region enjoys a largely plant-based diet of wholegrains, beans, garden vegetables and fruit, as well as sheep's milk and cheese. Meat is reserved for Sundays and special occasions; red wine is enjoyed moderately and exercise is incorporated into daily routines.

Ikaria, Greece
Here the diet is more traditionally Mediterranean, with plenty of fruit, vegetables, wholegrains, beans and

olive oil, as well as goat's cheese, honey and herbs. This island community is also no stranger to a mid-afternoon break.

Nicoya, Costa Rica
With little to no processed foods in their diet, this community enjoys a plentiful supply of antioxidant-rich fruit and veg. The diet includes fish, meat and dairy products, and has low levels of sugar. Faith, family, an optimistic outlook and an active lifestyle are also key.

Loma Linda, California
This community enjoys a mainly vegan diet. Many are members of the Seventh-day Adventist Church; they tend to avoid smoking and drinking and rest on the Sabbath.

How does the diet work?

As you might expect, there is no single Blue Zone diet, but there are common themes – the most notable being the reliance on self-produced, locally available foods. Other common factors include regular moderate physical activity, a sense of purpose, a positive outlook, and the importance of faith and community.

Is the Blue Zone diet healthy? A nutritionist's view...

The Blue Zones diet essentially replicates many of the current recommendations for healthy eating. There is generic evidence to support healthy eating for the prevention of heart disease, increased lifespan and healthy ageing. A healthy diet also appears to reduce the risk of obesity and helps maintain a healthy weight. The Blue Zone communities eat together, build physical activity into their daily lives and engage in their communities. This seems to help them maintain key capacities including mobility, cognition and a sense of purpose.

Does the Blue Zones diet work?

Evidence specific to the Blue Zones diet is lacking because there is no single diet. However, studies show that generic, healthy plant-rich diets are associated with reductions in the risk of heart disease, type 2 diabetes and certain cancers, as well as death from all causes. Without the studies to confirm, we can't fully judge whether following this 'diet' will have any effect. What we perhaps should be looking to the Blue Zones for is the apparent improvement in health quality during old age, as living longer doesn't always equate to living healthier elsewhere.

Enjoy these eclectic and delicious dishes, inspired by the cuisines of the world's Blue Zones

Grilled harissa sardines with fennel & potato salad

SERVES 6 **PREP** 20 mins
COOK 30 mins **EASY**

900g new potatoes
2 fennel bulbs
½ lemon, juiced
24 small good-quality black olives
5 tbsp extra virgin olive oil

For the sardines

12 sardines, cleaned and gutted
4 tbsp olive oil
2 tbsp shop-bought harissa
2 lemons, 1 juiced, 1 cut into wedges
3 tbsp chopped parsley

1 Cook the potatoes in boiling salted water for 15-20 mins, until tender. While they're cooking, remove any tough outer leaves from the fennel and trim the tops, keeping any feathery fronds. Halve lengthways, then remove and discard the little hard core from each piece. Finely slice the fennel with a mandoline or a sharp knife, then put in a bowl and squeeze over the lemon juice. When the potatoes are tender, drain well and toss with the fennel, olives, extra virgin olive oil, some seasoning and the reserved fronds.

2 If the sardines haven't been scaled, remove the scales by hand under running water, then wash out traces of blood from the inside and dry with kitchen paper.

3 Heat the grill. Mix the oil with the harissa and put the sardines on a grill tray covered with foil. Brush them with the harissa oil on both sides, season with salt and put under a very hot grill. Cook for 4-5 mins on each side, or until cooked through. Squeeze over the lemon juice and scatter with the parsley. Serve on the fennel and potato salad with wedges of lemon for squeezing over.

GOOD TO KNOW vit c • omega-3 • gluten free
PER SERVING 502 kcals • fat 28g • saturates 6g • carbs 26g • sugars 2g • fibre 5g • protein 34g • salt 0.8g

Bean & halloumi stew

SERVES 2 **PREP** 5 mins
COOK 20 mins **EASY** **V**

- 3 tbsp olive oil
- 1 onion, thinly sliced
- 1 red pepper, thinly sliced
- 2 garlic cloves, crushed
- 3 tbsp red chilli pesto, sundried tomato pesto or vegetarian alternative
- 1 heaped tsp ground coriander
- 400g can mixed beans, drained and rinsed
- 400g can chopped tomatoes
- ½ x 250g block halloumi, sliced
- ½ small bunch of coriander, finely chopped
- garlic bread, to serve (optional)

1 Heat 2 tbsp oil in a frying pan over a medium heat. Fry the onion and pepper along with a pinch of salt for 10 mins, or until softened. Add the garlic, pesto and ground coriander and cook for 1 min. Tip in the beans and tomatoes along with 1/2 can of water, then bring to a simmer and cook, uncovered, for 10 mins.

2 Add the remaining oil to a separate frying pan over a medium heat. Fry the halloumi for 2 mins on each side, or until golden-brown.

3 Season the beans to taste, then spoon into deep bowls. Top with the halloumi and scatter over the chopped coriander. Serve with garlic bread, if you like.

GOOD TO KNOW folate • fibre • vit c • 2 of 5-a-day
PER SERVING 468 kcals • fat 25g • saturates 7g • carbs 36g • sugars 12g • fibre 14g • protein 19g • salt 1.9g

Radicchio & puntarelle salad with anchovy dressing

Puntarelle is a type of chicory. The bases of the inner stalks have a mildly bitter flavour. The leaves and outer stalks can be used in stews and soups, but need to be cooked briefly in salted water first to lessen their bitterness.

SERVES 6 **PREP** 30 mins plus 1 hr soaking **COOK** 10 mins **EASY**

1 head puntarelle
1 small head radicchio trevigiano, sliced into thin strips

For the anchovy dressing

150ml olive oil
1 large garlic clove, finely chopped
50g anchovies, drained
80ml chardonnay vinegar or white wine vinegar

1 To make the dressing, heat a little of the oil in a pan and cook the garlic briefly (don't let it brown). Tip into a blender with the other ingredients and remaining oil, and blitz until smooth.

2 Pull the stalks off the puntarelle to find the core, and cut the individual bulbs into thin shreds. Put straight in ice cold water to soak for an hour. Drain well, then toss with the radicchio and the anchovy dressing.

GOOD TO KNOW 1 of 5-a-day • gluten free
PER SERVING 264 kcals • fat 26g • saturates 4g • carbs 3g • sugars 1g • fibre 1g • protein 3g • salt 1.2g

Roast romanesco with anchovies, capers & currants

This makes a great side dish, but it can also be tossed through cooked pasta for an outstanding main course. Romanesco is somewhere between cauliflower and broccoli, flavour-wise.

SERVES 4 as a side **PREP** 20 mins plus 1 hr soaking **COOK** 20 mins **EASY**

- 25g currants
- 1 romanesco cauliflower
- 3 tbsp extra virgin olive oil
- 3 banana shallots, halved and sliced lengthways
- 2 garlic cloves, finely sliced
- ¼ tsp chilli flakes
- 6 anchovies in oil, drained and roughly chopped
- ½ tbsp capers, drained and rinsed
- 10g pine nuts or flaked almonds, toasted
- 1 tbsp roughly chopped flat-leaf parsley or a mixture of parsley and mint
- squeeze of lemon juice

1 Put the currants in a small bowl and cover with boiling water. Leave to soak for 1 hr. Heat the oven to 190C/170C fan/gas 5.

2 Break the romanesco into florets using a small knife and arrange in a roasting tin in a single layer. Add 2 tbsp of the oil, season and toss to combine. Roast for 20 mins, until tender, tossing halfway through (keep an eye on it as it cooks more quickly than cauliflower).

3 Meanwhile, cook the shallots in the remaining oil over a medium heat for about 10 mins, until golden. Reduce the heat, add the garlic, chilli flakes and anchovies and cook for 2 mins more. Gently press the anchovies with the back of a wooden spoon to help them dissolve. Drain the currants and add to the pan along with the capers, pine nuts, herbs and lemon juice. Season, then toss with the roasted romanesco and serve.

GOOD TO KNOW folate • vit c • 1 of 5-a-day • gluten free
PER SERVING 164 kcals • fat 11g • saturates 1g • carbs 9g • sugars 8g • fibre 4g • protein 6g • salt 0.8g

Mediterranean vegetables with lamb

SERVES 4 **PREP** 15 mins
COOK 30 mins **EASY**

1 tbsp olive oil
250g lean lamb fillet, trimmed of any fat and thinly sliced
140g shallots, halved
2 large courgettes, chopped
½ tsp each ground cumin, paprika and ground coriander
3 peppers (mixed colours), chopped
1 garlic clove, sliced
150ml vegetable stock
250g cherry tomatoes
handful coriander, roughly chopped

1 Heat the oil in a large, heavy-based frying pan. Cook the lamb and shallots over a high heat for 2-3 mins until golden. Add the courgettes and stir-fry for 3-4 mins until beginning to soften.
2 Stir in the spices, peppers and garlic. Reduce the heat to medium and cook for 4-5 mins until they start to soften.
3 Add the stock and tomatoes, season, then cover and simmer for 15 mins, stirring occasionally, until the veg are tender. Stir in the coriander to serve.

GOOD TO KNOW vit c • 3 of 5-a-day
PER SERVING 192 kcals • fat 9g • saturates 3g • carbs 11g • sugars 10g • fibre 4g • protein 17g • salt 0.3g

Black bean, tofu & avocado rice bowl

SERVES 4 **PREP** 20 mins **COOK** 25 mins
EASY **V**

2 tbsp olive or rapeseed oil
1 red onion, chopped
3 garlic cloves, crushed
2 tsp ground cumin
2 x 400g cans black beans, drained and rinsed
2 limes, both zested, 1 juiced and one cut into wedges
396g pack tofu, chopped
2 tsp smoked paprika
2 x 200g pouches cooked brown rice
2 avocados, chopped
small bunch coriander, leaves only
1 red chilli, thinly sliced (optional)

1 Heat the grill to high. Heat 1 tbsp oil in a frying pan and cook the onion for 5 mins, until soft. Add the garlic and cook for 30 secs, then stir in the cumin and black beans. Cook for 5 mins, until the beans start to pop. Stir through the lime zest and juice and season.
2 While the beans cook, put the tofu in a bowl, season and gently toss with the rest of the oil and the paprika. Line a baking tray with foil and arrange the tofu on top. Grill for 5 mins on each side, until charred all over.
3 Heat the rice following pack instructions, then divide between bowls. Top with the beans, tofu, avocado, coriander and a wedge of lime. Garnish with chilli, if you like.

GOOD TO KNOW vegan • fibre • 2 of 5-a-day • gluten free
PER SERVING 546 kcals • fat 25g • saturates 4g • carbs 48g • sugars 4g • fibre 14g • protein 25g • salt 0.8g

Quick & easy fish stew

SERVES 2 **PREP** 10 mins
COOK 25 mins **EASY**

- 1 tbsp olive oil
- 1 tsp fennel seeds
- 2 carrots, diced
- 2 celery sticks, diced
- 2 garlic cloves, finely chopped
- 2 leeks, thinly sliced
- 400g can chopped tomatoes
- 500ml hot fish stock
- 2 skinless pollock fillets (about 200g), thawed if frozen, and cut into chunks
- 85g raw shelled king prawns

1 Heat the oil in a large pan and cook the fennel seeds, carrots, celery and garlic for 5 mins, until starting to soften. Add the leeks, tomatoes and stock, season and bring to the boil, then cover and simmer for 15-20 mins until the vegetables are tender and the sauce has thickened and reduced.

2 Add the fish, scatter over the prawns and cook for 2 mins more, or until just cooked through. Ladle the stew into bowls to serve.

GOOD TO KNOW healthy • low fat • low cal • folate • fibre • vit c • 3 of 5-a-day

PER SERVING 346 kcals • fat 8g • saturates 1g • carbs 20g • sugars 17g • fibre 11g • protein 42g • salt 1.7g

Photographs: THANASIS ZOVOILIS / THE IMAGE BANK / GETTY

Guide to the Banting diet

What is the Banting diet, and is it safe and effective for weight loss? Find out what you can eat on the diet, and who should avoid it

> The diet aims to restrict carbs to 5-10% of daily calories

What is the Banting diet?

The Banting diet has a long history, prescribed as far back as 1862, when it was adopted by an obese patient called William Banting. The first of many low-carb programmes, it promotes the use of fat stores as fuel.

How does it work?

The updated version of the diet bears more than a passing resemblance to the keto diet, and aims to restrict carbs to 5-10% of daily calories, with 65-90% from fat and 10-35% from protein. It is set out as follows:

Phase 1: observation – for one week you continue to eat your existing diet, without change, but keep a comprehensive food diary to help you recognise how your body responds to the food you eat.

Phase 2: restoration – for the next 2-12 weeks, depending on how much weight loss is needed, you follow a restoration phase designed to restore gut health. During this phase you'll start to follow the food lists, avoiding all foods from the Red and Light Red lists and relying on the Green and Orange lists.

> “Studies suggest that significantly restricting the carbs in our diet stimulates the body to use fat for energy”

Phase 3: transformation – this phase aims to achieve ketosis. This is the toughest stage, requiring sticking only to the Green list of foods.

Phase 4: preservation – the final phase lasts indefinitely and starts as soon as you reach your goal weight. It's more flexible, allowing the reintroduction of some foods.

What are the 'food lists'?

The diet features four coloured food lists, each with its own set of rules.

The Green list: foods you can eat without restriction, including leafy greens and onions; lemons, tomatoes and olives; meat, fish, eggs; and fats such as butter, ghee and cream.

The Orange list: foods the diet believes should be eaten in moderation, including nuts; milk and yogurt; apples and bananas; beetroot, and potatoes; legumes and pulses.

The Light Red list: foods you should hardly ever eat, including smoothies and juices; treats and chocolate; flours including gram and rice flours.

The Red list: foods the diet believes you should never eat, including fast food, sweets, processed meats, gluten and soft drinks.

What are the potential benefits of following the Banting diet?

Studies suggest that significantly restricting the carbs in our diet stimulates the body to use fat for energy. This appears to have benefits, including weight loss, better energy, better blood sugar control, reduced risk of heart disease, improved appetite control and improved sleep.

Is Banting safe in the long term?

There's no evidence on the safety of the Banting diet over the long term, and limited human evidence for the safety of this type of diet in general. Extended use may put lean body mass at risk and increase calcium loss, which impacts bone health.

Who shouldn't follow the diet?

Consult your GP or healthcare professional before starting any new diet, especially if you are elderly, aged under 18, have a pre-existing medical condition or are on medication.

These recipes are designed to be eaten during the 'restoration' and 'transformation' phases of the diet, helping you to avoid the restricted foods during these periods

Healthy pepper, tomato & ham omelette

(Restoration phase) – If you're in need of a healthy protein boost, try this omelette for breakfast. Using fewer yolks lowers the cholesterol.

SERVES 2 **PREP** 15 mins
COOK 10 mins **EASY**

2 whole eggs and 3 egg whites
1 tsp olive oil
1 red pepper, finely chopped
2 spring onions, white and green parts separated, finely chopped
few slices wafer-thin extra-lean ham, shredded
25g reduced-fat mature cheddar
chopped fresh tomato and wholemeal toast, to serve

1 Mix the eggs and egg whites, season and set aside. Heat the oil in a medium non-stick frying pan and cook the pepper for 3-4 mins. Add the white parts of the spring onions and cook for 1 min more. Pour in the eggs and cook over a medium heat until almost set.

2 Sprinkle over the ham and cheese and continue cooking until just set in the centre – you can cook it briefly under a hot grill if you like the top more well done. Serve with the green part of the spring onions sprinkled on top, the chopped tomato and some wholemeal toast, if you like.

GOOD TO KNOW healthy • vit c • 1 of 5-a-day
PER SERVING 206 kcals • fat 12g • saturates 3g • carbs 5g • sugars 5g • fibre 1g • protein 21g • salt 1.2g

Pea & broad bean shakshuka

(Restoration phase) – We've turned this classic brunch dish into more of a main course by adding spring veg.

SERVES 4 **PREP** 20 mins
COOK 30 mins **EASY** **V**

bunch of asparagus, woody ends removed
200g sprouting broccoli
2 tbsp olive oil
2 spring onions, finely sliced
2 tsp cumin seeds
large pinch cayenne pepper, plus extra to serve
4 ripe tomatoes, chopped
1 small pack parsley, finely chopped
50g shelled peas
50g podded broad beans
4 large eggs
50g pea shoots
Greek yogurt and flatbreads, to serve

1 Slice the asparagus, leaving the tips and about 2cm at the top intact. Slice the broccoli in the same way. Heat the oil in a frying pan. Add the spring onion, asparagus and broccoli and fry gently until starting to soften. Add the cumin seeds, cayenne, tomatoes and their juices and parsley. Season well, cover with a lid and cook for 5 mins, then add the asparagus, broccoli, peas and broad beans. Cover again and cook for 2 mins.

2 Make four holes in the mixture and break an egg into each. Arrange half the pea shoots around the eggs, season well, cover with a lid and cook until the whites are just set, or until cooked to your liking. Serve with the rest of the pea shoots, an extra pinch of cayenne, a spoonful of yogurt and some flatbreads, if you like.

GOOD TO KNOW healthy • folate • fibre • vit c • 3 of 5-a-day • gluten free
PER SERVING 199 kcals • fat 12g • saturates 2g • carbs 7g • sugars 5g • fibre 7g • protein 13g • salt 0.2g

Pork souvlaki

(Restoration phase)

SERVES 4 **PREP** 15 mins plus marinating **COOK** 10 mins **EASY**

400g lean pork shoulder, cut into 2cm chunks
1 tbsp olive oil
½ tbsp dried oregano
1 lemon, zested and juiced
½ tsp hot paprika
100ml fat-free yogurt
1 small garlic clove, grated
½ cucumber, grated
2 red peppers, chopped
2 Little Gem lettuces, leaves separated
chilli sauce and flatbreads, to serve

1 Put the pork in a large bowl with the oil, oregano, lemon zest and juice and paprika as well as a good pinch of salt. Toss everything together to combine and leave to marinate for 10 mins.

2 Mix the yogurt, garlic and cucumber in a small bowl. Season and set aside.

3 Heat the grill to high. Thread the pork and peppers onto four metal skewers, alternating between the pork and peppers as you go. Place on a non-stick baking sheet and grill for 3-4 mins on each side, or until cooked through and golden-brown. Serve with the lettuce and yogurt mixture, and chilli sauce and flatbreads, if you like.

GOOD TO KNOW healthy • folate • vit c • 3 of 5-a-day
PER SERVING 210 kcals • fat 8g • saturates 2g • carbs 8g • sugars 8g • fibre 5g • protein 25g • salt 0.3g

Mediterranean sardine salad

(Transformation phase)

SERVES 4 **PREP** 15 mins
NO COOK EASY

90g bag salad leaves
handful black olives, roughly chopped
1 tbsp capers, drained
2 x 120g cans sardines in tomato sauce, drained and sauce reserved
1 tbsp olive oil
1 tbsp red wine vinegar

1 Divide the salad leaves between four plates, then sprinkle over the olives and capers. Roughly break the sardines on top. Mix the tomato sauce with the oil and vinegar and drizzle over the salad to serve.

GOOD TO KNOW healthy • calcium • omega-3
PER SERVING 140 kcals • fat 10g • saturates 2g • carbs 1g • sugars 1g • fibre 1g • protein 10g • salt 0.9g

Avocado & chilli salad

(Transformation phase) – This ultra-simple salad makes a great lunch or side for a range of dishes.

SERVES 4 **PREP** 5 mins
NO COOK EASY V

1 ripe avocado, sliced
200g bag mixed leaves
For the dressing
1 lime, zested and juiced
1 chilli, deseeded and finely chopped
3 tbsp olive oil

1 Combine the ingredients for the dressing and season. Toss through the avocado slices and mixed leaves.

GOOD TO KNOW vegan • healthy
PER SERVING 153 kcals • fat 16g • saturates 2g • carbs 2g • sugars 1g • fibre 2g • protein 1g • salt 0.01g

Spicy chicken salad with broccoli

(Transformation phase)

SERVES 4 **PREP** 15 mins
COOK 10 mins **EASY**

2 heads of broccoli, cut into florets
2 tbsp olive oil
5 shallots, finely sliced
2 red chillies, deseeded and sliced
2 garlic cloves, sliced
handful pitted black olives
4 roast chicken breasts, sliced
4 tbsp soy sauce

1 Steam the broccoli for 4 mins, until just tender, then tip into a large bowl and season. Meanwhile, heat the oil in a pan, then fry the shallots for 2 mins. Add the chillies and garlic and cook for a further 4 mins, until softened.
2 Remove the shallots, chilli and garlic with a slotted spoon, then mix with the broccoli, olives and chicken. Add the soy sauce to the pan, warm over a medium heat, then pour over the salad. Enjoy warm or cold.

GOOD TO KNOW low fat
PER SERVING 291 kcals • fat 12g • saturates 2g • carbs 4g • sugars 3g • fibre 3g • protein 42g • salt 3.1g

Warm chicken salad with garlic mushrooms

(Transformation phase)

SERVES 2 **PREP** 20 mins
COOK 1 hr **EASY**

- 2 large chicken legs or 4 large thighs
- 2 tbsp olive oil
- 100g shiitake or chestnut mushrooms, sliced
- 4 garlic cloves, crushed
- 1 tsp fresh thyme
- 140g bag herb salad
- garlic bread, to serve

1 Preheat the oven to 220C/fan 200C/gas 7. Rub the chicken with the olive oil, season, then put in a small casserole dish or roasting tin, skin-side down. Roast in the oven for 30 mins. Remove from the dish and set aside. Leave the oven on.

2 Spread the mushrooms, garlic and thyme in the casserole dish and put the chicken on top, this time skin-side up. Pour 150ml hot water around the chicken and return to the oven for another 30 mins, stirring and checking after 15 mins that there's still some liquid left. If not, add a little more hot water. Take the casserole dish out of the oven and allow to cool slightly.

3 Once cool enough to handle, shred the chicken into a bowl using a fork and your fingers. Add the mushrooms, garlic and the juices from the dish. Mix well and season.

4 To serve, sprinkle the salad leaves into the mushroom and chicken mixture and gently toss so they wilt a little. Serve in a large bowl or on a platter, with garlic bread on the side.

PER SERVING 385 kcals • fat 30g • saturates 7g • carbs 2g • sugars g • fibre 1g • protein 27g • salt 0.3g

Should you try the paleo diet?

Does the 'caveman diet' work for weight loss, and is its focus on unrefined food better for our digestive systems? Our expert nutritionist shares the science.

> "The idea is this is more in tune with how we would have fuelled ourselves thousands of years ago"

The Paleolithic diet – also known as the 'caveman', 'hunter-gatherer' or 'paleo' diet – is all about eating like our distant ancestors did. Followers of the diet aim to eat as naturally as possible, opting for grass-fed meats, an abundance of fruit and vegetables and other wholefoods, like nuts and seeds.

How does the diet work?

The paleo diet is said to promote a more natural way of eating, with low levels of sugar and salt, and no processed, refined foods. The idea is that this is more in tune with how our bodies have evolved and how we would have fuelled ourselves thousands of years ago. As a consequence, the plan typically omits dairy, cereal grains, starchy vegetables and sugar in favour of wild, lean animal foods, non-starchy fruit and veg and honey.

The diet is not low fat but instead promotes the inclusion of natural fats from grass-fed livestock, fish and seafood as well as nuts, seeds and their oils.

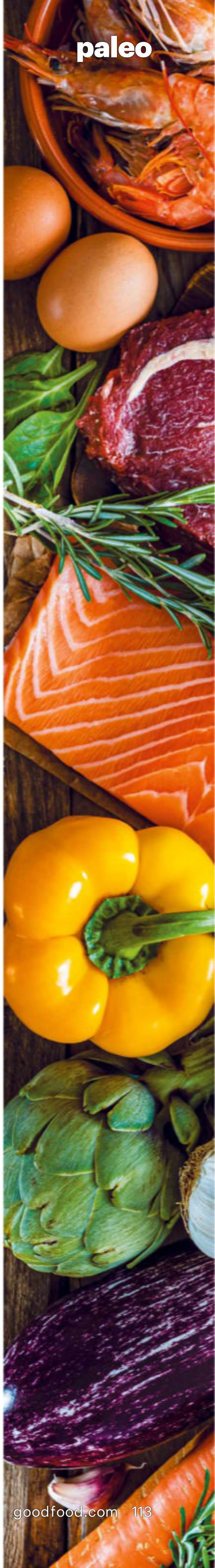
How to follow the paleo diet

This diet is relatively low in carbs but rich in lean protein and plant foods. These plant foods contribute fibre, vitamins, minerals and phytonutrients. Unlike some other low-carb diets, paleo doesn't promote salty, processed meats.

Over the years, some versions of the diet have evolved to include more modern foods such as butter from grass-fed cows and grains like rice. However, other versions shun even fruit or vegetables that are considered to contain too much fructose.

What can I eat on the paleo diet?

- Meat (lean, grass-fed)
- Fish and seafood (preferably wild-caught)



> This diet is relatively low in carbs but rich in lean protein and plant foods

- Eggs (free range)
- Green vegetables such as broccoli and kale
- Fruits, including berries, tomatoes and avocado
- Nuts and seeds
- Herbs and spices
- Fats and unsaturated oils, such as olive, flax, walnut and avocado

Foods to avoid on the paleo diet

- Legumes (including peanuts)
- Cereal grains
- Refined sugar, artificial sweeteners
- Potatoes and other root vegetables
- Processed foods and meat
- Salt
- Dairy
- Refined vegetable oils
- Soft drinks

What's the evidence for the paleo diet?

A number of small studies have suggested those following a paleo diet report positive health outcomes including weight loss, improved blood sugar control and a reduction in the risk factors for heart disease and type 2 diabetes. However, the level of evidence is weak because of the limited number of studies and the low sample sizes involved.

Is the paleo diet healthy? Our nutritionist's view...

Although the paleo diet may bring some health benefits, the logic behind the plan does have its faults. What our ancestors ate would have depended on their location – so avocados, for example, would be an unlikely dietary staple for us Brits. Our ancestors were also far more physically active, having to hunt for and gather their food.

What's more, the diet ignores the health benefits of wholegrains, beans, legumes and starchy veg. Numerous studies have reported a reduced incidence of heart disease in those who regularly consume three servings of wholegrains a day. The low-GI (glycaemic index) properties of beans and legumes, meanwhile, make them especially useful for those with blood sugar issues, and starchy vegetables are a great source of nutrient-dense energy.

Finally, omitting dairy has received criticism for potentially limiting intake of minerals like calcium. Those who have been diagnosed with or who are at risk of medical conditions including osteoporosis, or who have particular dietary requirements, should consult their GP before making changes to their diet.

We think these recipes are better than anything cavemen ate, but they still adhere to paleo diet rules

Seared steak with celery & pepper caponata

SERVES 2 **PREP** 10 mins
COOK 40 mins **EASY**

- 200g extra-lean fillet steak
- 140g fresh spinach

For the caponata

- Frylight olive oil spray
- 1 red onion, sliced
- 2 garlic cloves, finely sliced
- 400g can chopped tomatoes
- 2 celery sticks, sliced
- 1 orange pepper, sliced
- 25g pitted Kalamata olives, halved (about 8)
- 1 tbsp capers
- ½ tsp dried oregano or 1 tbsp fresh
- 1 tsp balsamic vinegar

1 For the caponata, spray a large, wide non-stick pan with 3 sprays of oil and add the onion and garlic. Cover and cook for 5 mins, stirring halfway through. Add the tomatoes plus a can of water, then stir in the other caponata ingredients. Cover the pan and simmer for 30 mins.

2 Heat a griddle or non-stick frying pan. Season the steak generously with black pepper, then sear for around 3 mins on each side, or until cooked to your liking. Allow the steak to rest while you wilt the spinach in a covered pan over a low heat.

3 Spoon the caponata onto two serving plates, top with the spinach, then slice the steak and arrange on top.

GOOD TO KNOW healthy • low fat • low cal • folate • fibre • vit c • iron • 3 of 5-a-day • gluten free
PER SERVING 269 kcals • fat 10g • saturates 3g • carbs 19g • sugars 15g • protein 27g • fibre 9g • salt 1.1g

Baked salmon with fennel & tomatoes

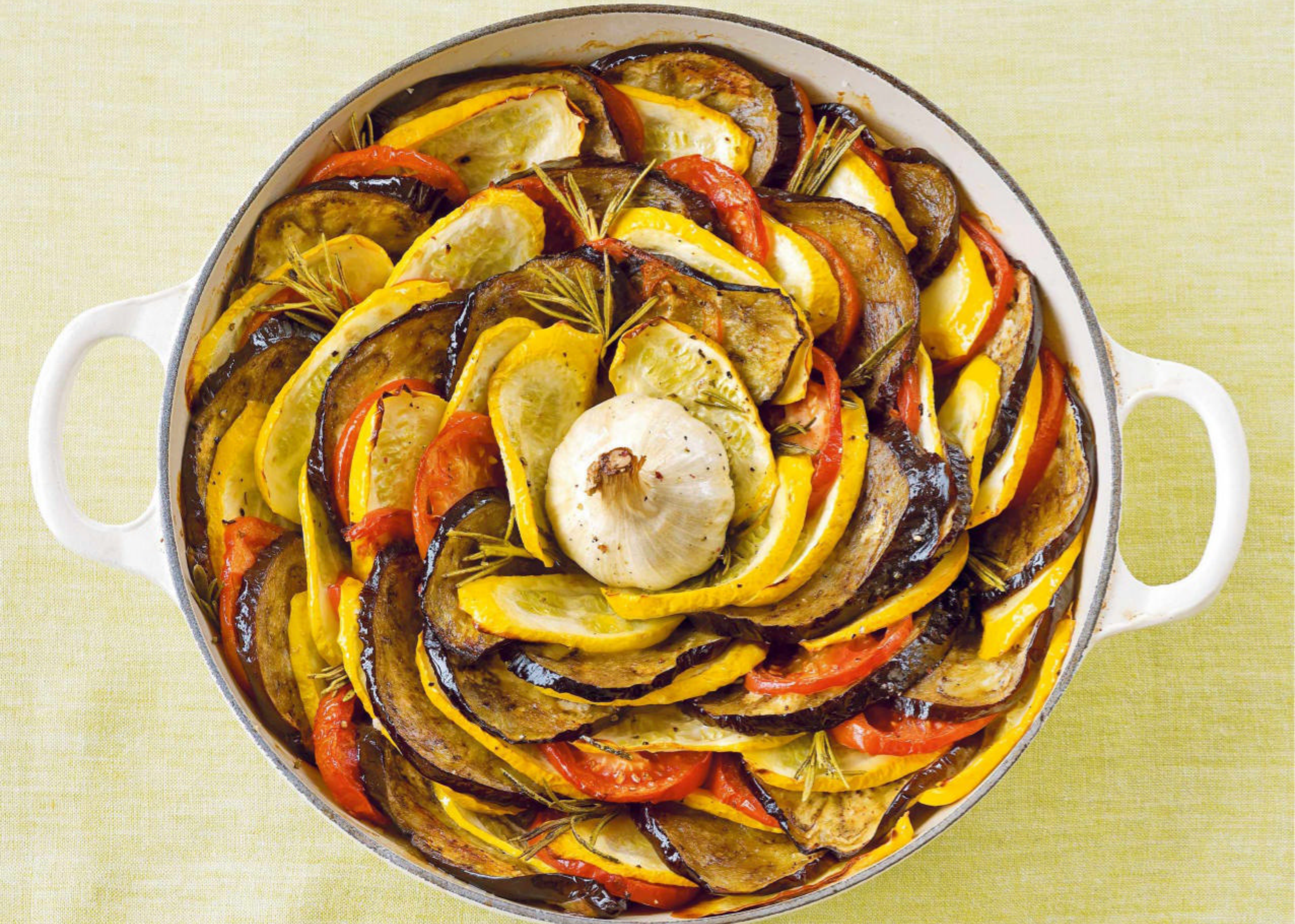
SERVES 2 **PREP** 10 mins
COOK 35 mins **EASY**

2 medium fennel bulbs
2 tbsp chopped flat-leaf parsley
1 lemon, zested and juiced
175g cherry tomatoes
1 tbsp olive oil
2 salmon fillets, about 175g each
few black olives (optional)

1 Heat the oven to 180C/fan 160C/gas 4. Trim the fronds from the fennel and set aside. Cut the fennel bulbs in half, then cut each half into 3 wedges. Cook in boiling salted water for 10 mins, then drain well. Chop the fennel fronds roughly, then mix with the parsley and lemon zest.

2 Spread the drained fennel over a shallow ovenproof dish, then add the tomatoes. Season, drizzle with the oil, then bake for 10 mins. Nestle the salmon among the veg, sprinkle with the lemon juice, then bake for 15 mins more, until the fish is just cooked. Scatter over the parsley mixture and a few black olives, if you like, to serve.

GOOD TO KNOW healthy • 2 of 5-a-day
PER SERVING 398 kcals • fat 25g • saturates 5g • carbs 5g • sugars 5g • fibre 4g • protein 37g • salt 0.3g



Layered roast summer vegetables

This dish makes an elegant side or vegan main course.

SERVES 4 **PREP** 30 mins
COOK 1 hr **EASY** **V**

extra virgin olive oil, for drizzling
4 large courgettes, thickly sliced (yellow ones if possible)
5 ripe plum tomatoes, sliced
2 aubergines, sliced
1 large garlic bulb, kept whole
small bunch rosemary, separated into sprigs

1 Heat the oven to 220C/200C fan/gas 7. Drizzle a round ovenproof dish with a little oil then, starting from the outside, tightly layer alternate slices of the vegetables in concentric circles until you get to the centre.

2 Put the garlic bulb in the middle, then tuck any remaining veg into any gaps around the outside. Stick the rosemary sprigs among the vegetables, drizzle everything generously with olive oil, then season well. Roast for 50 mins-1 hr, drizzling with more oil occasionally, until the vegetables are soft and lightly charred.

3 Take out of the oven and leave to stand for a few minutes, then remove the garlic and separate it into cloves for squeezing over the vegetables.

GOOD TO KNOW vegan
PER SERVING 240 kcals • fat 18g • saturates 3g • carbs 12g • sugars 11g • fibre 7g • protein 7g • salt 0.5g

Steamed clams in saffron & spring green broth

This makes a smart, quick starter. The clams are very salty, so use low-salt stock and don't add salt during cooking. To make it into a dinner party-worthy dish, add a splash of dry sherry to the stock and serve with spaghetti.

SERVES 4 as a starter **PREP** 5 mins
COOK 10 mins **EASY**

700ml hot low-salt chicken stock
75g diced chorizo
1 clove garlic, thinly sliced
pinch of saffron
2 small heads of spring greens, finely shredded
1kg small live clams or cockles, washed well
2 tbsp parsley, finely chopped
1 tbsp olive oil
lemon wedges, to serve

1 Put the stock, chorizo, garlic and saffron in a large pan and bring to the boil. Add the greens, cover and cook for 2 mins, until wilted.

2 Add the clams, cover and cook over a high heat for 4-5 mins until every clam has opened. Stir in the chopped parsley.

3 Using a slotted spoon, divide the greens and clams between large, shallow bowls, then ladle over the broth. Drizzle with oil and serve with the lemon to squeeze over.

GOOD TO KNOW healthy • calcium • vit c • iron
PER SERVING 156 kcals • fat 10g • saturates 2g • carbs 5g • sugars 3g • fibre 3g • protein 13g • salt 0.9g

Raw coconut truffles

An after-dinner alternative to chocolate, made without dairy.

SERVES 6 **PREP** 20 mins
NO COOK EASY V

- 2 x 90g packs fresh coconut pieces
- 50g macadamia nuts
- 2 tbsp raw coconut oil
- 2 tbsp raw honey
- 1 vanilla pod

1 Blitz the coconut and macadamia nuts in a food processor until very finely chopped. Reserve 5 tbsp of the mixture on a plate. Add the coconut oil, honey and vanilla to the food processor and blitz until combined.

2 Divide the mixture into 18 balls, then roll them in the reserved coconut and macadamia mixture. Serve straight away or store in the fridge until needed. *Will keep in the fridge for up to 2 days.*

GOOD TO KNOW gluten free
PER SERVING 231 kcals • fat 21g • saturates 14g • carbs 7g • sugars 7g • fibre 4g • protein 2g • salt none

Breakfast smoothie

SERVES 1 **PREP** 5 mins **NO COOK EASY V**

- 1 small ripe banana, sliced
- 140g blackberries, blueberries, raspberries or strawberries (or use a mix), plus extra to serve
- honey, to serve

1 Whizz the banana and berries in a food processor until smooth. Drizzle with honey and top with a few extra berries to serve.

PER SERVING 124 kcals • fat 1g • saturates 0.1g • carbs 25g • sugars 24g • fibre 5g • protein 2g • salt 0.01g

Photographs: FCAFOTODIGITAL / E+, CLAUDI TOTIR / MOMENT / GETTY

Rosemary chicken with oven-roasted ratatouille

SERVES 4 **PREP** 15 mins
COOK 40 mins **EASY**

1 aubergine, roughly chopped
2 courgettes, sliced
3 mixed peppers, roughly chopped
2 tsp finely chopped rosemary, plus 4 small sprigs
2 large garlic cloves, crushed
3 tbsp olive oil
4 skinless, boneless chicken breasts
250g cherry or baby plum tomatoes, halved
new potatoes, to serve

1 Heat the oven to 200C/180C fan/gas 6. In a large roasting tin, toss the aubergine, courgettes and peppers with half the chopped rosemary, half the garlic, 2 tbsp oil and some seasoning. Spread out the vegetables in an even layer and roast for 20 mins.

2 Meanwhile, mix the remaining chopped rosemary, garlic and oil together. Slash each of the chicken breasts 4-5 times with a sharp knife, brush over the flavoured oil, season and chill for 15 mins.

3 After the veg have cooked for 20 mins, stir in the tomatoes. Make spaces in the roasting tin and nestle the chicken breasts in between. Put a sprig of rosemary on top of each breast. Roast for 18-20 mins more, until the chicken is cooked through and the vegetables are lightly caramelised. Serve with some new potatoes, if you like.

PER SERVING 288 kcals • fat 11g • saturates 2g • carbs 11g • sugars 10g • fibre 5g • protein 37g • salt 0.3g

Sweet treats

An occasional treat doesn't hurt anyone. Try this light chocolate dessert, packing in vitamin C and heart-healthy flavonoids from the dark chocolate, or our high-fibre vegan apple crunch

Dark chocolate orange creams

SERVES 2 **PREP** 5 mins
COOK 5 mins **EASY** **V**

25g 85% dark chocolate, broken into small pieces
150g low-fat yogurt
1 small orange
a few mint sprigs, leaves picked, to serve

1 Melt the chocolate in short bursts in the microwave, or in a heatproof bowl set over a pan of simmering water, ensuring the bowl doesn't touch the water. Leave to cool for a few seconds, then mix in a little of the yogurt.
2 Finely grate the zest from half the orange, then cut away the peel and pith and chop the orange flesh. There's no need to cut away the membrane between the segments unless it's very tough.
3 Stir the remaining yogurt into the chocolate, then stir in the grated zest. Put the orange pieces in the base of two small serving glasses, then spoon the chocolate mix on top. *Will keep chilled for up to three days.* Scatter over a few mint leaves to serve.

GOOD TO KNOW low cal • vit c • gluten free
PER SERVING 140 kcals • fat 6g • saturates 4g • carbs 15g • sugars 13g • fibre 2g • protein 5g • salt 0.13g

Healthy apple crunch

SERVES 4 **PREP** 15 mins
COOK 50 mins **EASY** **V**

- 240g Bramley cooking apples, peeled, cored and chopped (200g prepared weight)
- 3-4 small dessert apples, peeled, cored and sliced (260g prepared weight)
- 340g porridge oats
- 2 tbsp ground cinnamon
- 2 tsp vanilla extract
- 3 tbsp rapeseed oil
- 400g fortified soya yogurt

1 Heat the oven to 180C/160C fan/gas 4. Put all the apples in a small pan, add 6 tbsp water, then cover and cook over a medium heat for 6 mins, stirring halfway through, until the apples are just cooked. The cooking apples should be pulpy, but the dessert apples will retain their shape.

2 Tip the oats, cinnamon and vanilla into a bowl and add 3 tbsp of the apple mixture, the oil and 100g of the yogurt. Mix everything together with your hands until the mixture has formed into chunky clusters similar to granola. Spread the clusters out on a large baking tray lined with baking parchment and bake for 10 mins. Shake the tray to turn the clusters over and bake for 10 mins more, until firm. Leave to cool for 5 mins.

3 Meanwhile, spoon the remaining yogurt into a small, shallow ovenproof dish, then spoon the rest of the apples on top. Scatter over the oat clusters, and bake for a final 10 mins, until the topping is firm and golden and the apple mixture has warmed through.

GOOD TO KNOW vegan • healthy • fibre
PER SERVING kcals 552 • fat 19g • saturates 2g • carbs 71g • sugars 14g • fibre 12g • protein 17g • salt 0.37g

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Trusted recipes from the Good Food test kitchen

Even if you're not following a specific diet plan, you can still pick and choose from all these delicious recipes

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RECIPE KEY 🟢 Vegetarian 🟡 Vegan

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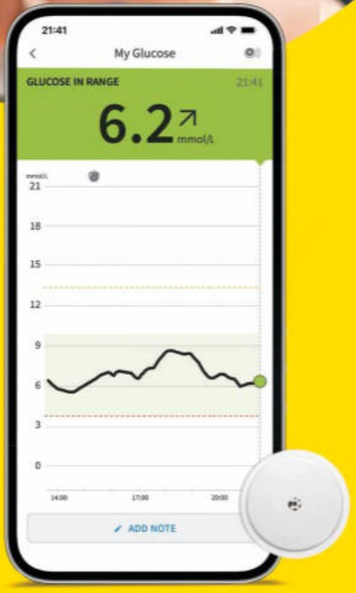
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My Glucose
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